



As a newly minted partner in Weber Gallagher's Family Law Group, veteran attorney Lawrence J. Persick leads clients through a multitude of challenging legal matters.

Ready for ANYTHING

by BILL DONAHUE
photography by JODY ROBINSON

In even the best circumstances, a divorce, custody dispute, or adoption can be a jarring experience. To navigate these potentially turbulent waters, it's essential to have the leadership of an individual who serves not only as a trusted attorney but also as an unflinching advocate—in other words, someone blessed with the wisdom, compassion, and experience to help clients get to “the other side” as intact as possible.

Enter Lawrence J. Persick. As the newest member of Weber Gallagher Simpson Stapleton Fires & Newby LLP's Family Law Group in Norristown, Persick concentrates his practice in matters pertaining to family law—namely, divorces, child support, custody disputes, and adoptions. He feels fortunate because he has the opportunity to work directly with people looking for resolution in the face of real problems.

“More often than not, these are people who are going through times of great pain

and tremendous stress,” says Persick, who is known as “Skip” to his family and close friends. “In matters of divorce, you’re essentially undoing a partnership, which can be painful. In adoption cases, there tend to be a lot of unknowns to contend with that can cause stress for everyone involved.”

Throughout his career, Persick has developed a reputation for being able to resolve even the most complex family law issues, including cases dealing with juvenile dependency and the termination of parental rights. For example, Persick represented the prevailing party in a Berks County decision in which his client’s husband had essentially faked his own death. Persick was able to win compensatory and punitive damages for his client on tort claims that were raised in the context of a divorce action; he believes it is one of the few cases—perhaps the only one—to have been granted such relief.

In regard to adoption, he references one case involving a family from Kennett Square.

“There was an agency from Oklahoma involved, and they didn’t dot the I’s and cross the T’s, so there was some difficulty finalizing the couple’s adoption,” he recalls. “You’re dealing with people’s lives here, so you have to have a steady hand. I was able to have a judge in Chester County accept the consent to adoption. The parents are forever grateful to me; I still get Christmas cards from them, and it’s 10 years later.”

Part of the Team

In December, Persick joined Weber Gallagher’s seasoned team of family law attorneys, including Carolyn R. Mirabile, John Zurzola, and Donna Marcus. His addition returns to four the number of attorneys in Weber Gallagher’s Family Law Group; Lynne Z. Gold-Bikin, an internationally known attorney who had served as the group’s chair, passed away unexpectedly in October.

“Lynne was a force of nature—larger than life—and she has been sorely missed,” Persick says. “I’ve known Carolyn for 20 years through the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Doris Jonas Freed American Inn of Court, and I have a great deal of respect for her and every member of the [Weber Gallagher] team. I like the fact that we have four attorneys who practice family law every day, so it’s more of a team approach. I also like the fact that we can collaborate on cases and bounce ideas off of each other.”

One might say describe Persick’s joining Weber Gallagher as a homecoming, of sorts, as a return to his roots in Montgomery County. Persick grew up in King of Prussia and graduated from Upper Merion High School. He then headed west, to Dickinson College in Carlisle, north of Gettysburg, from

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which he earned his undergraduate degree in philosophy. The desire to have “a tangible effect” on the lives of others drove him to continue his education at the Dickinson School of Law. After earning his Juris Doctor, he clerked for a judge in the Poconos and then went on to become a public defender in Chester County. Eventually he joined the West Chester-based law firm Lamb McErlane P.C., where he spent the next 29 years building his family law practice.

“My objective is to get my clients through this process as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible,” says Persick. “I also look at it from a long-term-needs perspective, and I use that forward-looking view as my guiding star, to advise them on how to work through the process. I’ve gotten calls from people over the years who have checked in after the fact and said, ‘Thank you for helping me get through it.’ Some of them say things like, ‘I didn’t always see things clearly at the time, but I’m thankful that you were.’”

Staying Involved

In addition to his work with Weber Gallagher’s Family Law Group, Persick remains committed to improving the lives of others, including participating in initiatives to inform and protect the public. He serves as co-chair on the Legislative Committee of the Pennsylvania Bar Association’s Family Law Section, for example, and he’s also a member of the Family Law Section’s Leadership Council.

In fact, Persick spoke at an Oct. 2 press conference at the Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex in Harrisburg in support of the Act 21 of 2018, a landmark piece of legislation on custody standing. Since having been signed into law by Gov. Tom Wolf in July, Act 21 has helped to expand the list of third parties who can request custody of a minor child when the parents cannot be located. Persick says the legislation may help to serve “as an antidote



to situations surrounding the opioid crisis.”

Likewise, Persick is devoted to lending a guiding hand for the next generation. As a member of the Dickinson College Alumni Council, he appreciates the opportunity to mentor students who have an interest in the law. In January, for example, he worked closely with a number of Dickinson students through an externship program, meeting with them at the courthouse in West Chester, and providing firsthand insight between hearings.

Going forward, Persick intends to build on his commitment to helping others—whether it’s by sharing his wisdom with a young person or by guiding a client through a sensitive family law matter.

“For me, and I think for the firm, [joining Weber Gallagher] has been a win-win situation,” Persick says. “I intend to maintain a presence in West Chester, and I look forward to building my practice outside of Chester County. I’m happy that the vast majority of my clients have followed me to Norristown.” ■

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