

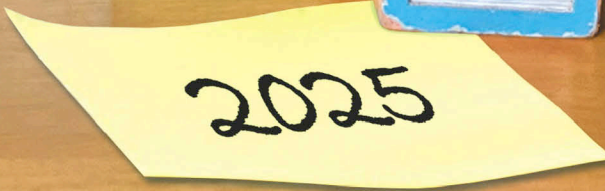
SUPPLEMENT TO THE LOS ANGELES AND SAN FRANCISCO

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DENA A. KLEEMAN

KLEEMAN KREMAN

BEVERLY HILLS

Dena Kleeman has dedicated her career to family law, bringing a background in child development and a commitment to respectful resolution to her practice.

Her journey began before law school when she worked as a special-needs teacher for preschool children, developing an interest in how family dynamics affect child development.

Kleeman's legal path was shaped at Stanford Law School, where she graduated in 1983. Two professors significantly influenced her career direction: Michael S. Wald and Robert Mnookin.

"Professor Wald encouraged me to enter the field of family law," Kleeman said. Wald was involved in California's Dependency Court system reform.

Her professional experience began at a Northern California civil firm before joining a family law firm led by Harry Hanson, whom she credits as "an excellent mentor and model family law practitioner in the respectful manner he treated his adversaries, the court and his clients." She later practiced in Los Angeles with Walzer and Gabrielson before establishing a long-term partnership with Ruth Kremen.

"We have enjoyed the intellectual aspects of the practice, the endlessly interesting dynamics of families and parenting. We learned from each other and from our courtroom experience to litigate more proficiently and wisely," Kleeman explained about her partnership with Kremen. Their practice philosophy focuses on settlement and child protection first while maintaining readiness for litigation when necessary.

Kleeman remains engaged with legal developments through continuing education and her work with the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Family Law Section, which she currently chairs.

Her case portfolio includes representing domestic violence victims, negotiating complex asset divisions and establishing lifetime trusts for dependent spouses.

Kleeman spent several years representing a domestic violence victim, both through her domestic violence trial and then her divorce. She said it was a long, but ultimately successful litigation process, and she believes her client feels a great sense of relief and greater safety for her and her child.

"The case involved excellent trial preparation and presentation," Kleeman said. "The client provided the commitment and practice time to make this happen. This commitment is somewhat rare and the time it takes is not always available."

Another separate matter involved extensive tracing of separate assets consisting of

numerous commercial properties held over a lengthy marriage.

Kleeman said this client, who had a long-term banking relationship that spanned not only his life, but preceding generations of his family, was able to "dig up" documents from 30-plus years past which was extremely fortunate (and rare) and proved very convincing.

"We were able to confirm his separate property and negotiate a buy-out of spousal support through a lump sum annuity," Kleeman said. "In my experience, a well-crafted settlement, with a fair, satisfying resolution, is the goal to aim for in family law."

Lastly, in another case involving business interests both domestic and abroad, Kleeman represented a dependent spouse.

"I proposed and then reached a settlement that established a lifetime trust for my client," she said. "The case involved interpretation of a decades-old Indonesian premarital agreement. The litigation would have been exceedingly expensive and lengthy. The court was very fair in its initial fee award, which can make a vast difference in bargaining."

Kleeman identifies several challenges in family law practice, including developing cooperative relationships with opposing counsel, researching unusual legal questions and presenting factual information in court in a convincing and understandable way.

She advocates for courts to focus on settlement while providing fair attorney fee awards that "meet prevailing standards in the community."

She also points to the need for better mental health support services in family court. "We, in family court, need to do a better job of keeping track of, and intervening in, the long-term health of families," Kleeman concluded, highlighting her ongoing commitment to improving family law systems.