

Serving families is Freedman's passion



Attorney Gary Freedman joined Cohen & Lombardo PC last fall after 20 years of running his own firm.
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Gary Freedman finds himself in one family courtroom or another nearly every day.

He helps clients with a variety of cases that range from divorce and custody to domestic violence, abuse and neglect.

"I settled on family and matrimonial because I really just love it," he said. "I love helping people. I love helping them put their pieces back together once things have fallen apart and helping them find resolutions and a peaceful settlement for the kids' sake."

For more than 20 years, Freedman piloted his own practice in Buffalo. Last September, he joined Cohen & Lombardo PC and has since enjoyed the different approach to being an attorney.

"The biggest difference is you have incredibly talented help all around you. ... Just to have that help and just to have that level of competency to go to somebody and say, 'Hey, I want to run something by you' is phenomenal," he said.

Freedman had a big year in 2018.

Aside from his new job, he got married and was named Family Court Practitioner of the Year by the Assigned Counsel Program of Erie County.

"I wasn't expecting anything like that on any level. There's so many talented people who do what I do," he said.

Family court is rigorous, according to Freedman. It takes a special person to handle family law cases exclusively. The overarching goal is to help people rehabilitate their lives, he said.

"Family law is restorative and holistic, in my opinion," he said.

Emotions run on full tilt but Freedman helps clients to calm their nerves and find help outside of an attorney they might need.

"One of the first things I like to do is see if there's some kind of counseling, something extra that they need to help them through the time that they're going through," he said. "My first goal is holistically their health and their well-being. And that's what I focus on first. If I'm representing somebody and they're not right (mentally), it's not going to help or serve their case."

A realm of the practice area Freedman is fond of taking on cases in is domestic violence, even as

counsel for alleged perpetrators.

"In a lot of those cases, you can get them to see (that how they acted) is not the way to be," he said. "You have to be different. Things have to change. You can get them help and counseling."

"There are a lot of people who believe perpetrators can't be helped but I don't believe that. I think anybody can change. Anybody can grow. It's just a matter of finding the right way to guide them through the process."

Familiarity with family court is helpful for attorneys working cases, he said.

"I've seen lawyers come in who are great lawyers in their field but they don't really understand the nuances of family court," he said. "Family court is a very unique and different and (at times) odd place. If you don't know what you're doing coming in and you don't know the judges or the judges' clerks, you're going to find yourself in a problem."

In custody and attorney-for-the-child cases, he looks to find a middle ground for families. Freedman was adopted himself and said he has empathy for all children.

"My goal is to help them do that so they never have to come back to court again and so there can be harmony for that child," he said.