



Women ²⁰¹⁰ of Influence



Lisa Dailey, president, Lisa M. Dailey law firm

Colorado Springs family law practitioner Lisa Dailey has a pragmatic take on her legal specialty. Since at least half of marriages end in divorce, the best thing she can do is make sure her clients, their children and their soon-to-be ex-spouses craft the best solutions for all parties.

"I really enjoy the challenge of trying to do something positive," Dailey said.

Dailey, who works as a sole practitioner, didn't gravitate toward family law after graduating from the University of Colorado School of Law in 1987. Instead, she joined her father's 24-year-old law practice with the intention of focusing on personal injury litigation.

Dissatisfied by the "gamesmanship" of personal-injury law, she found her passion in family law.

"In family law, it's so real," she explained. "I'm most interested in trying to solve the problem."

Solving the problem sometimes means stepping outside the traditional attorney box, she said. Dailey has received extensive training as a mediator and also practices collaborative law. She sees the traditional attorney role, the mediator role and the collaborator role as equally valuable ways to achieve the best possible result for her clients.

"I would like to be known as an attorney who showed the community that there are different ways to solve a conflict," she said. "Attorneys get used to doing things

one way, but now we have new lawyers and clients saying, 'How about this way?'"

The traditional court process has its place, but also produces many bitter divorce proceedings, Dailey said. Mediation emerged in the late-1980s as a viable alternative. In mediation cases, she serves as the objective third party who helps both sides find common ground.

"Mediation allows the family to keep control over solving their own problem," Dailey said. "It's one tool, one way for people to move through the system."

Attorneys serve as advocates for a client, she said. Mediators need to carefully avoid any biases toward one party or another and to maintain an atmosphere of neutrality, Dailey said.

She also endorses collaborative law as another tool for helping clients achieve the best outcome. Collaborative law is similar to mediation, but is different in that it involves two lawyers who serve more as consultants than advocates. Such lawyers will not take a case to court, Dailey said, so their clients have a big incentive to resolve their differences without the court's intervention.

Regardless of what role she plays, Dailey is recognized as a top lawyer by her peers. She is only the third woman elected president of the El Paso County Bar Association in its 100-year history. She also has received top rankings in Martindale-Hubbell's



lawyer ratings, and was selected by her peers for 2009's "Best Lawyers in America" publication.

Not surprisingly, Dailey singled out her lawyer father as a mentor who helped her develop a passion for helping people solve their problems. And she credits her mother for her strong work ethic.

Her clients, Dailey said, also play a strong role in her development. No client is the same and all have taught her valuable lessons about how to use her various skills to bring resolution to troubled times.

By Dan Cook

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