

# Family First



As a tireless advocate for her clients and their families, as well as her own, family attorney **Susan Levy Eisenberg** proves that, with hard work and dedication, it is possible to “have it all.”

by LEIGH STUART photography by JODY ROBINSON

**A**n oft-quoted piece of folk wisdom shares: “Life is what happens while you’re busy making other plans.”

This is certainly the case for Susan Levy Eisenberg, an attorney who has been a diligent shepherd for clients in turmoil. For the past 30 years, she has been helping clients in Bucks and Montgomery counties through divorce, custody, and other related family-law matters.

Susan’s instincts initially pointed her toward a career in finance. She studied accounting at Drexel University but obtained an internship with the Philadelphia Attorney General’s office at 6th and Market. This experience “turned my head for law,” she says, and would change the course of not only her own life but also the lives of the countless people who would become her clients.

Of her choice to specialize in family-law matters in the 1980s, Susan says, humbly, “It just sort of happened.” In reality, she worked with diligence to succeed in the field, taking time along the way to experience the joys and challenges of motherhood.

Susan had her first baby in 1994. Then in 1997, while she was pregnant with her second

child, she made a bold decision: to leave a comfortable position with a large firm for a partnership with another attorney that would afford her greater flexibility and the freedom she needed to raise her young children. She stayed in this partnership until 2004, when she put her courage to the test once more and ventured out to build a practice of her own in Newtown.

“My dad motivated me more than anything,” says Susan. “Since I was a young girl, he taught me to be independent and self-sufficient. My dad was a physician, so he was his own boss his whole life. He instilled in me the need for education and self-reliance.”

Susan hopes to instill these same values in her clients, as well as in the young female lawyers she mentors today.

“I have no daughters—I have two boys—but I think it’s important to show them that a woman can be independent and self-sufficient,” she says. “I see people who are married, who’ve made sacrifices for their families at the expense of their education or career. Then, after a separation from their spouse, they find themselves scrambling to find their way. That’s a scary

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proposition, and I like to help them navigate their situation.”

As a family-oriented person herself, Susan knows just how hard it can be to have a family and a rewarding career.

“As little boys and young teens, my sons always asked me why I wasn’t at the bus stop or home when they returned from school,” she says. “I had ‘mommy guilt.’ But now that they are 24 and 21, my sons respect women who are self-sufficient and career-oriented.”

In fact, one of her sons even plans to follow in his mother’s footsteps by pursuing a career in law.

“You can have it all, if you work hard,” she adds. “It’s a balancing act.”

In addition to dedicating her time to her clients and family, Susan is a board member of the Bucks County Bar Foundation—a charitable arm of the Bucks County Bar Association—and works diligently with Legal Aid of Bucks County to assist with clients of insufficient means.

“I can be two different people: one aggressive; and one amicable,” she says. “People really need someone who is capable of both. Many family lawyers out there follow the rule that the more hostile the case, the more money they can make. It’s a plague on my profession, and I try my hardest not to be like that. I try to never do the unnecessary. I will fight and litigate, if necessary, but it does not always have to be the first line of defense.”

Susan handles matters with her clients with the same tender hands that have cared for her own family.

“I feel that I can help my clients get through a very difficult time,” she says. “Like with a death, clients go through a mourning period and will face many changes; it is very emotional and financially devastating for all parties. I like to think I can help them through this process, with level-headedness, logic, and experienced vision. You have to keep a level head. You need to be the strong one and give clients valuable guidance and advice, which I base on my 30 years of experience. I am here to help them look past their anger or pain, be their calming force, and help them make sound decisions which sometimes they may not realize for years.”

Susan’s longevity in law can be attributed to talent and dedication, of course, but perhaps more important than these factors is her lifelong commitment to lifting up others.

“My goal is to help people,” she says. “I want to be respected and helpful; I want to be someone that people can look back on and say, ‘Wow, she made a difference.’ At the end of the day, I just want to do something good.” ■