

TOP ATTORNEYS

DIANA RICHMOND

More than two decades of devotion to the family law specialty lend Diana Richmond a certain prominence in that field.

"She's been a stalwart in family law for probably 20 or 30 years," said Garrett Dailey, president of Oakland legal software research company Attorney's BriefCase Inc. and a family law specialist who does appellate work. "I don't know anybody who doesn't respect her abilities or integrity."

Although Richmond's practice emphasizes mediation and private judging now, she still takes some clients and appellate cases — but she's choosy.

"I select for complexity and people's ability to rationally solve their problems," Richmond said. "I'm trying not to do any litigation anymore." She prefers to emphasize constructive problem solving rather than "zealous advocacy, which I think is ill-suited for family law matters."

Richmond, who has been a partner with San Francisco's Sideman & Bancroft since 2001, has practiced in San Francisco since graduating from Golden Gate University School of Law in 1973.

She began as a civil litigator, taking a lot of plaintiffs personal-injury work — and doing her best to avoid family law. When Stern, Stotter, Rosenberg & O'Brien offered her an associate's position out of law school, "I had the arrogance to say yes, if I didn't have to do family law," Richmond said. She left the now-defunct Stern, Stotter after four years to work out of her own small firm.

Richmond doesn't remember when she started taking family law cases, but she does recall that once she started choosing her own clients and approach, she was hooked. She has focused exclusively on family law since 1980. "I enjoy working with people at a difficult time in their lives and help giving them tools to make the rest of their life better," Richmond said.

Richmond said the bulk of cases in which she represents clients revolve around financial issues. She enjoys the intricacies of spousal and child support, she said, including "different and sophisticated ways of calculating needs, return on investments and sources for payment."

"She is excellent in the appellate arena," said Thomas Wolfrum, a solo family law specialist in Walnut Creek. "She has all the skills at the highest level."

Richmond, 57, was one of the attorneys who worked on "Bounds of Advocacy: Goals for Family Lawyers," which she describes as a guide of "super ethics" for family law attorneys. It was published by the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

— Pam Smith



SHELLEY EADES



SIDEMAN & BANCROFT LLP

One Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111
Phone: (415) 392-1960
Facsimile: (415) 392-0827