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Strong Suit

Dallas family-law attorney A. Michelle May exudes warmth and kindness – but she also possesses the strength and experience you need to reach a favorable resolution to your family-law conflict.

APPPEARANCES can be deceiving: just ask

the clients of Dallas family-law attorney A. Michelle May. Once described as a “lethal combination of sweet and salty,” May gives a first impression that is pure Southern Belle. “And I am that,” she says with a laugh. “But when it comes time to fight, that’s when the gloves come off and the sweet goes in the drawer.”

Educated at Baylor University School of Law – where there’s a strong emphasis on litigation – May quickly learned that this was an area in which she excelled. She established her own firm in Belton, TX in 1992, focusing on family-law litigation, both at the trial-court and appellate levels.

In 1998, May accepted a position with McCurley, Kinser, McCurley & Nelson in Dallas. “I wanted to learn from the best,” she explains. “Mike McCurley and Kathy Kinser were – and still are – great mentors.” In 2003, she returned to private practice, opening The May Firm, a family-law boutique firm focusing on litigation, mediation, and appeals. “I offer clients the same experience they would have with an attorney at a big firm – but in a more personalized setting and, hopefully, with greater cost efficiencies,” she says. “That’s my goal.” She is a fierce opponent in the courtroom, but May believes that litigants should make every effort to settle, if possible. To that end, she is also a trained and experienced mediator.

Family-law appeals are another significant side of the firm’s business, says May, who has been published in the appellate law books a significant number of times. “In Texas, there are very few lawyers who are experienced in appealing family-law cases. It’s not a normal appeal: there are many unique things you must know to be successful,” she says. “I have the experience and knowledge of an appellate lawyer,” which May believes makes her a better litigator. “It gives me a unique ability, because I know more about the big picture than a lot of lawyers.”

A contributor to local consumer and professional legal publications, May has been listed in Who’s Who in America and Who’s Who in American Law; she was also invited to join the Annette Stewart Inns of Court. She volunteers her time with Altrusa International of Dallas, a community-service organization dedicated to the empowerment of women.

When she meets clients for the first time, May asks them to tell her about their situation, then talks about the law and how it might apply in their case.

"I like clients to articulate their goals for the litigation," she says. "What is it they expect? Then, I help them create realistic goals."

Tough with the opposition but compassionate with her clients, Michelle May has what it takes to help you through this difficult transition: intelligence, experience, and strength. "Many of my clients tell me that they appreciate my honesty and directness," she adds. "I don't blow smoke or sugar-coat things. I see people through one of the two or three worst situations of their entire lives. Helping them get out on the other end of it – hopefully with their sanity and finances intact – is very satisfying to me."