

Angela L. Haas:

Family law is very emotional. It's emotional for the clients. It's emotional for us. And we're strong for our clients, but we also feel for them. The number one thing above all else is to make sure that the clients are being properly served.

Speaker 2:

You're going through potentially a bad situation, sometimes isn't always safe or good for you. So I always felt coming here was a safe place, very supportive, and I think that's why I liked it. It was basically the support that you got.

Angela L. Haas:

I started out doing mediation when I first got out of law school, and I was actually doing some mediations in the criminal courtroom when I was in law school. When I got out, what was coming in the door for me was family law. They told me in law school, "Don't do family law." But that's what was coming in the door for me and I really love it and I've been doing it ever since.

I don't just listen to their problems. I actually can take an active role in helping them solve those problems. That's what I love about what I do. Around 2003, I started getting really interested in the LGBT issues with regards to family law because we didn't have same-sex marriage. There was a period of time for a couple decades where there were situations that in one state the law would be one thing. In another state it would be another thing. Or they got married in Canada or they got married in California or in another location where the marriage was valid, and then they come to North Carolina. Well now we're going to recognize it, but 10 years ago, we wouldn't have recognized it. And so over the years, different things have happened to give rights that now we don't have to do certain contracts that we used to do. Now we don't have to have certain will provisions that we used to have. So it's really just paying attention to the current state of the law and the current state of the recognition of certain types of relationships.

I think one advantage that we have is I'm married to a woman and I understand the dynamics of the relationships in the community. I've had clients come in and they're like, "I went to this attorney..." and they're treated differently. But I know. I know what they're going through. I know what they've been through. I understand what they're saying when they say "I'm married," when they're not married.

My experience has been if you treat other people with respect, they're going to show you respect. And so I want my client to be respected and I want them to be respected by the other side. And so I try to respect the other side and then hopefully I'll get that in return.

Gabriela Matthews:

I like meeting the client where the client is. That client needs to be heard, listened to, validated, acknowledged. That makes a big difference.

Angela L. Haas:

Going to an attorney's office, it's scary. I just want people to relax. If it takes humor to do that, then I'll use it. Obviously, there are times when humor is not appropriate and I won't do it.

Amy H. Nuttall:

Angela and I have been together for 23 years. We went to law school together. We have worked together for 16 of those years.

Gabriela Matthews:

I couldn't just join any firm and just be, "Oh, well, whatever. I'm okay with it." Because I'm very picky about the quality of work I do for my clients.

Angela L. Haas:

No matter what's going on, whether it be someone here or the client, you got to be able to step in and help and do your best to make things easier on other people. There's got to be communication between everyone in order to best serve the client. And it totally makes sense for the client because sometimes they'll call in and I won't be here, or Amy won't be here. Tammy will say, "I know that she was working on that and this is where she was in the process." And so they can give the client some information and at least to know that we are working on it. They really need to know that we're paying attention.

Tammy Kendall:

It lets the client know that they're being taken care of, that they're not being forgotten.

Carol DeVita:

All of our attorneys are very caring individuals. They truly listen. They pay attention to what you're feeling in addition to what is going on.

Speaker 7:

It's just made it really easy. I always feel very well cared for.

Speaker 8:

She was always honest with me and never took advantage of anything. So that was key. I felt comfortable. She promised me she'd get me there. She did. And to this day, we're still friends.

Gabriela Matthews:

I see people now that I helped 20 years ago, and they'll come up to me the grocery store and say, "Gabriela, you don't realize how much you changed my life. You made such a difference." That's rewarding that people come to me and say you made such a difference.