

The Savvy Woman Presents: Women in the Field of Law



Yvonne L. DelPrincipe,
Attorney



Deadra Finnese Woods Stokes,
Attorney



Cathe Renee Evans Williams,
Attorney



Karyn R. Vanderwarren,
Attorney/CPA

Women in Law

Chicago South Suburban Woman Newspaper is delighted to introduce you to four outstanding women in the legal profession. Read on as these fascinating women tell us why they chose law as a career and answer a few fun questions as well.

Karyn R. Vanderwarren, Attorney/CPA

BA in accounting, St. Xavier University; JD, Chicago-Kent College of Law
Private practice, Hickory Hills and downtown Chicago, with a focus on real estate, corporate law and estate planning

How and why did you start your practice?

I enjoy practicing law, but I also enjoy the challenge of managing my own practice and developing my own client base. Running my own practice helps me relate to the problems that my clients run into in operating their own businesses.

Career rewards?

Helping clients solve problems that sometimes seem to have no solution is my reward.

Why are you passionate about the law?

I love arming my clients with the information that they need to make good decisions.

Last good movie you saw?

I am a comic book fan; "Iron Man" was the last good movie that I saw.

Favorite Olympic event?

Gymnastics is my favorite event.

Favorite breakfast food?

My favorite breakfast food is a homemade blueberry smoothie. However, when I am in a rush, an Egg McMuffin will do the trick.

Deadra Finnese Woods Stokes, Attorney

BS in chemistry with a minor in biology, Xavier University of New Orleans; JD and environmental certificate, Chicago-Kent College of Law
Partner, Woods & Evans, LLC, Matteson, with a focus on real estate, estate planning, business law and bankruptcy

How and why did you start your practice?

After I passed the bar exam, I started working in my law professor's law firm on a contract basis. Eventually, I began to service my own clients. I enjoy helping those in need, and more importantly, I love being able to educate others in the law, using their individual experiences as the lesson.

Career rewards?

I am at a wonderful stage in my legal career; I have found the best combination of legal services to provide to my clients while promoting both wealth accumulation and preservation of the family.

Why are you passionate about the law?

I am passionate about taking people from a low point and bringing them to a higher point.

Last good movie you saw?

"Blood Diamonds" is an excellent movie set against the backdrop of civil war and chaos in 1990s Sierra Leone.

Favorite breakfast food?

My favorite is a Spanish omelet.

Yvonne L. DelPrincipe, Attorney

BA in criminal justice, University of Illinois-Chicago; JD, The John Marshall Law School
Partner, Prendergast & DelPrincipe, Evergreen Park and Chicago, with a focus on real estate, corporations and family law.

How and why did you start your practice?

I've always had an interest in the law, but I didn't pursue law school until I was involved in my own divorce. As a single mom with twin daughters, I worked days and went to law school at night and during the summer. I was fortunate to start a private practice with another John Marshall alum, who had been a solo practitioner for many years. I began doing family law by default (he didn't want to do that type of work anymore, so I tried it). Our practice has grown with the addition of a third attorney. We're a family practice, literally, since my partner and I have been married to each other for 15 years.

Why are you passionate about the law?

I'm passionate about helping to eliminate some of the pain associated with being involved in the legal system. People have enough heartache before they even make the appointment to see me.

Last good movie you saw?

I haven't had time to go to a theater in ages. The last good movie that I saw was "Chicago." I just loved all the music and dancing.

Favorite Olympic event?

If I could participate in the Olympics, the sport would be beach volleyball, minus the skimpy uniforms. Way too old and fat for that!

Favorite breakfast food?

I never eat breakfast. I'm a coffee addict—black or Starbucks Skim Latte. When we go out for breakfast, I love to have French toast.

Cathe Renee Evans Williams, Attorney

BS in business management, DePaul University; JD, University of Illinois College of Law
Partner, Woods & Evans, LLC, Matteson, with a focus on real estate, family mediation, uncontested family law and business law

How and why did you start your practice?

I began private practice in Chicago in 1996 as an independent contractor with the Law

Firm of Thomas E. Vaughn & Associates.

In 1997, I became a partner and the firm's name changed to The Law Firm of Vaughn & Evans. In December 2001, I joined Holt & Woods, Ltd., as an independent contractor. In February 2002, I became a partner and that firm's name changed to Holt, Woods & Evans, Ltd. In January 2005, it became Woods & Evans, LLC. I didn't know what kind of law I wanted to practice until a man asked me if I could help him get custody of his children because their mother allowed her new boyfriend to sell drugs from her home, and the children were afraid and in danger. I had never represented a client in a custody case before, but I took the case. I was excited when the judge awarded my client custody, but almost immediately, my heart began to break when I saw the mother run out of the courtroom defeated, crying, confused and with no more parenting skills than when the case began. In that moment, I realized that there was no place for one party winning in the family law courtroom. The entire family should win, so I began to concentrate in family law cases and my client base grew. I became passionate about trying to get spouses to see that litigating their family law issues was destructive for their children, themselves and the community. I no longer represent clients in contested divorce matters. I am now a family law mediator. Through mediation, couples work out their adult differences while maintaining their integrity and minimizing the financial and emotional expense of divorce.

Career rewards?

I am rewarded when a couple decides to put family first and comes up with a mutually agreed upon resolution, whether it be marriage counseling or an amicable divorce.

Why are you passionate about the law?

I am passionate about family mediation because I think it can help preserve the health of each individual, including the children, in divorce. It also can provide both parents with the financial resources to offset the inevitable decrease in household income that comes with divorce.

Last good movie you saw?

My favorite movie is "Pay It Forward."

Favorite Olympic event?

The 800-meter relay is my favorite.

Favorite breakfast food?

I love scrambled eggs.