

Having worked for a prestigious tax accounting firm in the Bay area, and having practiced family law here locally with the firm of Higgs, Fletcher & Mack, when did you begin your own practice? I opened my own family law practice in 2011.

Must one be an attorney to offer consultation on divorce in California?

While it may be possible to negotiate a divorce settlement on your own or with a mediator that is not an attorney, if you own a business, have significant assets or some other complex situation, hiring an attorney is the best way to ensure your interests are protected.

How does being a Certified Family Law Specialist distinguish you from other divorce attorneys? The State Bar of California awards the designation of Certified Specialist in Family Law, also called a Certified Family Law Specialist to attorneys who have “gone beyond the standard licensing requirements.” An attorney may apply for such certification after demonstrating proficiency in the area of family law through years of experience and education. In addition, the attorney must pass a written examination in the field of family law.

After becoming certified, Certified Family Law Specialists must continue to demonstrate a high level of experience and skill, fulfill the ongoing legal education requirements and be evaluated by other attorneys and judges.



This is a rigorous process and as you might imagine, there are not a lot of family law lawyers who are Certified Family Law Specialists.

Choosing an attorney who specializes in Family Law is crucial

Is it ever wise to allow one attorney to represent both sides of a divorce?

Actually, attorneys are prohibited from representing opposing parties in California. In a divorce, the two spouses are opposing parties in a legal action, and this is true even if you remain amicable. If the parties attend mediation however, one mediator can facilitate a dissolution. Most experienced mediators recommend that each party hire his or her own consulting attorney to help facilitate a resolution and file all the required paperwork.

How important is a decision to select an attorney who specializes in Family Law? Just like you wouldn't go to a general practice doctor for open heart surgery, neither should you go to an attorney who doesn't focus his/her practice on family law matters.

What common mistake will a party make when deciding that a divorce is inevitable? Even though it often is a very emotional time, it is important to remain calm and communicate in a civil manner. Another important task at the beginning of a divorce is to gather your tax and other financial records. For example, if one party contributed separate property to the purchase of a community residence, he or she can receive a reimbursement. However, evidencing such a claim is much easier with the appropriate documents.

How large has your firm grown over the years? When I started my firm, I employed only one part-time assistant. Today we have four attorneys and six staff members.