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# Spotlight Long Island

**Wisselman, Harounian & Associates Partners Preparing to Celebrate 44th Year of Legal Excellence**



**Firm founder Jerry Wisselman and his partner, Jackie Harounian, on the left**

About to celebrate its 44th anniversary in 2020, Great Neck matrimonial and family law firm Wisselman, Harounian & Associates and its attorneys have been widely recognized as leaders in their field. Firm founder Jerry Wisselman and his partner, Jackie Harounian, recently spoke with us about the firm's mission, what makes it unique, and several other subjects.

**Q: What sets Wisselman, Harounian & Associates P.C. apart from other law firms?**

**JW:** Very few matrimonial and family law firms can match the longevity of WH&A. Jackie and I have been working together for 28 years and have been partners since 2006. Since 1976, when I started our firm, my goal has been to have trusted relationships with our clients and to leave no stone unturned in their representation. Family conflicts can cause extreme emotional and financial crises, and we provide the benefit of having extensive experience to help our clients more effectively achieve favorable outcomes and navigate these difficult periods. Having started as a sole practitioner, I quickly recognized that it requires a team effort to best serve our clients, and I have assembled one of the largest matrimonial firms in the New York Metro area, with nine attorneys having diverse backgrounds, including accounting, tax law, business, estate planning, foreclosures, domestic violence, and psychology.

**Q: What is the mission of Wisselman, Harounian & Associates P.C.?**

**JH:** Our mission is to educate, empower

and protect our clients, and we take that responsibility very seriously. As we work with our clients through difficult and deeply sensitive times for them, we strive to provide compassion, information, and direction so they can confidently move forward and successfully prevail in this transitional period. We continue to work at being in the forefront of newly developing areas of family law as society's needs evolve and change, including issues regarding not only marital relationships, but nonmarital relationships, single parents, LGBTQ issues, fertility matters, cyber harassment, and the like.

**Q: How has technology changed the way your firm handles cases and clients?**

**JH:** The ever-increasing role of technology plays a more impactful role in the lives of, and in our representation of clients. For many individuals and families dealing with family conflict, there is often digital evidence which can have a profound effect on matters, including emails, texts, postings on social media, and videos. Cyber harassment has become a more common threat and can result in clients seeking and securing orders of protection against this. New applications and technologies are helping parents co-manage custodial and family scheduling, and provide a way to communicate with their child's other parent when phone, text and email isn't working for them. With the goal of reducing conflict, these have been productive alternatives for facilitating parents to communicate when other means do not work.

**Q: Have cybersecurity issues impacted your company?**

**JH:** With technology and the ability to transfer documents comes the need for advanced security for all clients, especially high net worth clients. As a result, it is important to guard our clients' confidentiality and privacy, including sensitive documents and financial records. We continually take steps to prevent breaches by constantly updating our systems, utilizing password protection where possible. We also advise clients to change passwords and take extra precautions to store important documents, photographs, and financial statements.

**Q: How have the types of cases your firm handles changed over the years?**

**JW:** There have been sweeping changes during the past decade, including no-fault divorce, a significant move towards presumptive joint custodial agreements, and newly evolving equitable distribution and support laws. Also, with a greater amount of second and even third marriages, we are involved with a greater number of prenuptial and postnuptial agreements and mediations. WH&A is committed to staying ahead of the curve as social change transforms the definition of marriage and the notion of family, as well as with the emerging laws in this area.

**Q: What is the biggest challenge that your firm is facing?**

**JW:** Our biggest challenge is to successfully educate our clients and manage their expectations about the divorce process during a very difficult time in their lives. We work to overcome their anxiety and uncertainty by being responsive, and providing them with realistic options at every stage. Each client is important to us, and our goal is to help them get to the finish line with their dignity intact, and for them to move forward towards a better, happier chapter in their lives.

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