

TOP LAWYERS 2008



DIVORCE LAW CURTIS BOUNDS

The divorce business is booming, especially in this economy. Clearly, divorce attorneys like Curtis Bounds don't twiddle their thumbs. Bounds, who heads the Family Law department at Bayard P.A. in Wilmington, handles "higher conflict or higher asset cases." Translation: His clients are rich. And when high-income couples divorce, the battle comes down to preserving lifestyle.

"Both sides have different views of that, but of late, both parties are in the work force with good jobs," says Bounds. "There are less circumstances where one party is financially dependent on the other."

Children are often caught in the crossfire. "You're already putting kids through a divorce, which is hard enough, but parents also have to deal with support, paying for private school tuition and maintaining certain lifestyles for the children," Bounds says. "Plus, we're seeing a lot of shared residency orders from the court, in which the children reside in both households on an equal basis."

Having a separate family court is an advantage for Delaware parents. In other states, there are courts of general jurisdiction with divisions of domestic relations law. Delaware Family Court handles adoption, termination of parental rights, property division, custody, divorce and all other family-related matters except seriously violent family crimes.

Bounds, a past chair of the Family Law Section of the Delaware State Bar Association, helps clients with pre-nuptial agreements, support matters, visitation and adoption. He serves husbands, wives and unmarried parents. He also gets repeat business, clients ending their second, third or fourth marriages.

According to National Health Center stats, the divorce rate in America, after a first marriage, is about 41 percent. Second marriages are about 65 percent. The divorce rate of third marriages is close to 74 percent.

"The reality is, you can't make everybody happy, especially in divorce law," says Bounds. "The sad truth is that if both parties are unhappy, you've achieved the best result."

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