

ESQUIRE

CARLTON MARCYAN

Astute, keenly curious, and always willing to listen, Schiller DuCanto & Fleck Senior Partner Carlton Marcyan deploys a deep arsenal of skills to steer clients through the challenges of divorce.

WORDS BY THOMAS CONNORS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBIN SUBAR

Carlton Marcyan isn't a therapist. He's not a life coach. He's a family law attorney. But as he readily notes, "If you can't be empathetic, if you can't bond with your client in understanding his or her insecurities and issues and priorities, you won't have much of a career."

A senior partner at Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP, Marcyan has spent nearly forty years assisting individuals at some of the toughest moments of their lives. And he prides himself on his determination to listen effectively, to ask the kind of questions that will not only help him make the best case, but that reveal the emotional character of a client and allow him to anticipate how well that individual will meet the challenges that are part and parcel of any divorce proceeding. "Many times, a client may neglect to share something that could be important," observes the Lake Forest resident. "But that's human nature. So I'll initiate a dialogue that may not appear to have a direct bearing on the case, but these conversations put clients at ease and they begin to open up. I'm prospecting and the nuggets I unearth can be tremendously valuable, especially in a custody-related case."

Expert at every strategy available in a divorce proceeding—including mediation, litigation, and binding arbitration—Marcyan has been instrumental in formalizing collaborative practice as a constructive approach for achieving satisfying outcomes. A resolution method in which the parties agree not to go to court, collaborative practice is intended to reduce tension and animosity as attorneys, financial experts, and other professionals guide clients to good faith settlements. Shares Marcyan, "I was actively involved in convincing the Illinois State Bar Association to endorse collaborative practice and help us get the Illinois Supreme Court to adopt a Supreme Court Rule that acknowledges it as a distinct and specific process."

Like mediation—in which spouses meet with a mediator to come to agreements on child support, custody, and property—collaborative practice affords couples privacy. "When you go to court," reminds Marcyan, "there are hearings and all your family issues and personal foibles are exposed publicly. With collaborative practice and mediation, that is all contained and confidential. And you have a greater ability to participate and shape the outcome. When both sides understand that they can do something that's mutually beneficial and can get the case over in maybe four months rather than two years, they realize that this is a much better approach than litigation."

Key to Marcyan's success is his fluency in all things financial. Before graduating from what is now known as University of



Illinois-Chicago School of Law, he earned a degree in accounting from DePaul University and worked for Coopers & Lybrand (now PricewaterhouseCoopers). "While I was in law school, I sat for the CPA exam, passed, and went back to Coopers & Lybrand as a tax attorney. I did that for little over a year, but I really wanted to be a litigator." At the time, there was a move nationally to change the complexion of divorce law and deal with financial holdings in a more equitable manner. "Serendipitously," recalls Marcyan, "Schiller DuCanto & Fleck was looking for somebody who understood balance sheets and various asset types. So I was at the right place at the right time."

In recent years, Marcyan has continued to expand his expertise, earning an MBA with a specialization in organizational behavior from Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, and a MCR from Dominican University in conflict resolution. When he's not bolstering his bona fides—or relaxing with his wife Ana, their three children and two grandkids—Marcyan gives time to the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Rotary Club and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC), which works with attorneys, mental health experts, and financial professionals to help families negotiate major life changes. And when this much-lauded attorney (he's been recognized multiple times as one of the *US News & World Report* Best Lawyers in America) is ready for a little personal R&R, he loves revving up his Harley Road Glide and hitting the road for days at a time. He's a big scuba diver, too. Golf? Not so much. "Oh I golf. But people pay me not to play."

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