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CHICAGO LEADERS IN LAW

# A Voice of Reason in Family Law

The Law Office of Michelle A. Lawless LLC focuses on minimizing the negative impacts of divorce.



“Helping people resolve their divorce or other family law matters outside of court is my primary focus,” says attorney Michelle Lawless. “I endeavor to be a voice of reason, whether it’s in a parenting conflict or a complex financial transaction, in order to reach a favorable outcome for my client.”

Prior to founding The Law Office of Michelle A. Lawless LLC, she spent nearly two decades honing her negotiation and litigation skills at one of Chicago’s largest and most prestigious firms. Her training and experience allow her to deliver streamlined, top-tier service while also providing the tailored, personalized approach of a solo-practice law office. Focused on a resolution-oriented practice of law, she provides couples with options that are more productive and private than traditional approaches to divorce.

“When things are decided by a court, both sides give up their power to make decisions for themselves. Judges often know very little about these families, yet they are tasked with making binding decisions about clients’ children, property, and money,” Lawless says. “Litigation, while sometimes necessary, is an adversarial process that can really alienate

families. There are several alternatives that put both sides on the best path to continue co-parenting their children together after a divorce.”

## The Collaborative Connection

Utilizing the collaborative process—a method where both parties work with collaboratively trained lawyers, coaches, financial professionals, and child specialists to achieve a mutually beneficial settlement—Lawless implements creative solutions to a wide range of difficult problems, such as parenting schedules and the allocation of complex assets such as businesses, commercial real estate, and private equity interests.

“When settling a case outside of litigation you must make every effort to think outside of the box because you don’t have a judge to break an impasse. But if you can think outside of the box, the parties can agree to arrangements that may not be available to a judge in litigation,” Lawless explains. “Examples can be everything from establishing joint bank accounts to fund children’s expenses, the continued holding of a jointly titled residence in order for a child to continue at their high school through graduation, and structured

property settlements to ensure the continued operation of a family-owned business. All of these solutions, however, require the parties to have a solid relationship post-divorce.”

Another benefit of taking a lower-conflict approach is privacy, which can be an undervalued reason to resolve divorces outside of court. Divorce battles can be incredibly messy, painting the parenting and financial actions of both sides in the worst possible light, and every filing in a divorce is a matter of public record.

“Collaborative, mediated, and negotiated divorces are highly attractive options for couples who want these matters to be resolved privately and discreetly,” Lawless says. “It also enables the parties to complete this process in a more positive manner, instead of going to court and having to put their lives on display.”

  
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