

Cammuso takes the law personally

BY LIVIA GERSHON

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As a teenager in the 1990s, Linda T. Cammuso got her first visions of a career in law from that era's courtroom dramas, including the real-life spectacle of the O.J. Simpson trial.

"I really kind of got hooked on the idea of the legal profession," she said.

Today, Cammuso is a real-life high-powered lawyer. But, in the intervening years she found an approach to the law very different from the aggressive drama of courtroom prosecution and defense. As co-founder and co-owner of Estate Preservation Law Offices in Worcester, she works closely with people facing some of the most sensitive decisions of their lives.

"When you sit down with somebody for the first time, it's as intimate as sitting down with their doctor, sitting in a johnny," she said.

Clients may need to talk about the state of their marriage, the future needs of a child with a disability or substance use disorder, or deciding who to entrust with guardianship of their children.

"Your job is to stay objective so that you can counsel them objectively," she said. "But, by the same token, they're all very delicate, human conversations."

Cammuso's interest in end-of-life questions began during her college years, when she worked at the Jewish Healthcare Center in Worcester. While in law school, she interned at Fusaro, Altomare & Ermilio in Worcester, working in estate planning with attorney Brendan King. Not long after, Cammuso and King started their own firm.

That was 2009. A decade later, Estate Preservation Law Offices has grown from five employees to 10 and has acquired two other law firms.

"It's been important for us to create a really healthy work environment for people," she said. "We're all here to provide for ourselves, and you want to do it in a way that you feel like you're making a difference somehow but you're also enjoying yourself in the process."

Cammuso found one of her tasks as a manager has been keeping staff satisfied as they've gone through life changes like having children or caring for aging parents. She and

King put a lot of thought into helping employees advance in their careers while having time for their lives.

"Over time it went from sort of incidental to very deliberately starting to create a workplace culture where we overtly tried to help people ... achieve that work-home dynamic," she said.

Cammuso has been involved in a number of Worcester community organizations over the years. That interest sprang out of a desire to broaden her outlook following the intensely focused years of moving from college to law school and then developing her practice.

"You feel like you're running, running, running," she said. "I found myself, as I was turning 30, feeling I had become very one-dimensional."

Cammuso's first involvement as a nonprofit board member was at Girls Inc. in Worcester. Victoria Waterman, the nonprofit's CEO, said the organization sought Cammuso out because its fund development department needed help with planned giving efforts.

"What we really found was that she's added so much more," Waterman said. "She has a remarkable skillset that's rare, that she's able to take complex legal types of issues and translate them into a layman's approach that makes sense. When she speaks, it just clarifies everything."

Cammuso said she's increasingly interested in challenging the branding of collaboration and a focus on feelings as feminine and weak.

"There's so much of our innate nurturing side that we try to subdue in the workplace because we feel there's no place for us – that makes us great contributors," she said. **W**



Linda T. Cammuso

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Colleges: Suffolk University Law School, Assumption College, Worcester State University & Quinsigamond Community College

What has been the key to your success? Treating people with respect, learning how to ask for help, and being open to exploring opportunities – from serving on a board to starting a business.

What is your advice for women in the business world? Having been everything

from an unpaid intern to a company owner, there is nothing more important than how you treat people around you. It is also crucial to learn how to adapt and not be afraid to redefine yourself.

What is the future for women in the workplace? The recent cultural movements have positioned women to continue promoting positive change. With our innate instincts to communicate and connect, we can humanize the workplace experience as we help each other overcome personal and professional obstacles.