

# An Inspiring Voice in Family Law

by Rebecca Light

When you open the door to the Carter Family Law Group, you'll find more than a conference table and well-appointed decor. You'll find Marjorie Carter— a lawyer, mediator, and woman with a genuine love and understanding of relationships.

For nearly two decades, Marjorie Carter has helped clients in a difficult phase of their lives with compassion at the forefront. Though divorce is generally portrayed as negative, Marjorie says it is important to recognize that a divorce can actually serve as the beginning of a new and more positive life stage, rather than being a sign of failure.

"Most of my clients arrive at my office in a wounded state," Marjorie says. "I'm empathetic with my clients, and I understand the source of their pain. I'm able to see that although this door is closing, another door will open for them. And through that new door is a better chapter of their life."

Marjorie works with clients in her practice with a holistic approach. She enables her clients to look beyond their current challenges. "It's up to me to look at the bigger picture and the longer term," she says. Marjorie shows that a brighter future is not only possible, but that her clients deserve it.

Marjorie meets the goals of her clients in many ways. Services such as communication coaches are available to allow those in the process of divorce to clearly voice their goals. Clients not only emerge from proceedings with better communication skills, but with the knowledge that there is life beyond divorce.

As a founding member of the Collaborative Family Law Association in St. Louis, Marjorie excels in the role of collaboration in divorce proceedings. Collaboration provides a viable alternative where parties work together to achieve an agreement. Control of decisions is kept to the clients rather than being left to the judge. By committing to collaboration,



Marjorie Carter

Marjorie's clients are part of a safe and respectful process.

Meeting with her clients one-on-one is essential to begin the healing process. "I take time to get to know my clients before I advise them about legal issues," says Marjorie. "I think it's important for me to understand their values and the issues that are most dear to them, so I can offer them advice that is consistent with their goals. My business is about relationships, including the relationship I forge with my clients."

Marjorie and her client then meet with the spouse and his or her collaborative attorney in one of several meetings. When parties agree to use collaboration and not a courtroom, they are able to see solutions come to fruition and move forward to a better working relationship after matters are decided.

Marjorie also enjoys her work as a mediator, where she acts as an impartial and objective voice to find the middle ground in a divorce proceeding. Without judgment, Marjorie listens to both sides and resolves issues in a way that makes sense to both parties.

"I partner with my clients to help them through the divorce process, and

assist them in finding the process that works best for them," shares Marjorie. "I offer my clients the benefit of my knowledge and expertise. The decision to use the collaborative process or mediation to resolve conflicts may be the most important decision a client in a divorce can make." There are times that litigation is necessary, and this is another area where Marjorie excels.

When litigation is the only option, a client may actually gain self-confidence by doing the one thing he or she thought would be insurmountable: standing up to the other party in a trial. "Often doing the thing we think we aren't capable of can be a positive growth experience," says Marjorie.

Marjorie advises that parties facing divorce could benefit by doing research about the process options they have available. "This is especially important in the present economy, since making an unwise decision can be very costly, from both a financial and an emotional perspective."

Marjorie Carter is more than just an attorney. Her approach to the intricate field of family law is not only unique, it is inspirational. Marjorie not only speaks for her clients, but with reassurance and support, allows her clients to speak for themselves.

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