

Your Divorce Court "Dream Team"

Ten years ago, during the O.J. Simpson trial, we all became familiar with the phrase the "dream team." This phrase became the description for the cluster of high profile criminal defense attorneys and other experts that Simpson surrounded himself with in his bid to re-obtain his freedom.

While I am certainly not suggesting that I endorse the idea of anyone being allowed to get away with any crime, especially murder, I have given some thought over the years to what I feel would be a divorce litigant's "dream team."

In the context of the emotional, often gut-wrenching experience of divorce, to me the divorcing client's "dream team" consists of an experienced and empathetic divorce lawyer, a competent mental health therapist, and a forensic accountant.

The experienced divorce lawyer is an expert in the law, the court system, the Judge, and very often knows something about how the other attorney works, what his reputation is, and the like. He or she also is compassionate with the client's circumstances but is able to keep from becoming emotionally entangled in the case so that he can be most effective as an advocate.

A well-trained therapist can be an expert in the areas of soothing emotional upset, human relations, child raising issues, custody issues, and evaluating substance abuse and other issues. He or she can be available for emergency counseling sessions as the need may arise, ongoing emotional support, and/or creating reports to help the Judge understand what is happening in the case on an emotional/psychological level.

A forensic accountant is an expert in financial issues related to divorce, including valuing small businesses, analyzing cash flow, preparing financial statements, and similar services. He or she can assist the client and lawyer with the preparation of the Case Information Statement (perhaps the most important financial document in any divorce case) and can also assist in resolving all financial issues.

I am not suggesting that all divorce cases require all of these experts. Indeed, a small percentage of divorce cases are handled by people on their own without any of these experts, including lawyers. Nonetheless, the vast majority of divorce cases that I have seen over the past almost 20 years here in Monmouth County certainly have benefited when the litigants had competent divorce lawyers. When competent mental health professionals and/or forensic accountants were brought on board, the results were often far more favorable than one would have expected had these experts not been involved.

Taken together, these three experts--the divorce litigant's "dream team" in my view--can help someone going through the process of divorce successfully

navigate the legal, the psychological/emotional, and the financial dilemmas that often permeate divorce cases here in Monmouth County and elsewhere.

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