



## Top of her game

*Beaver one of the best in local law*

SANDRA ZARAGOZA | STAFF WRITER

Since graduating from the University of Texas School of Law, Becky Beaver has zagged when everyone else has zigged — and it's worked.

Although not by design, Beaver has found herself at the forefront of things during her career. When she graduated in 1977, Beaver was among a small percentage of women in her class. And instead of taking a judicial clerkship or entry level position at a corporate firm, Beaver launched her own practice straight out of law school.

"I had definite ideas about what I wanted to do," Beaver says. "It really afforded me the opportunity to be my own boss."

Beaver's decision set her apart from the typical environment new lawyers work in, says Karen Bartoletti, who graduated with Beaver.

"You walk into a position where people will tell you what to do," says Bartoletti, a partner at Graves Dougherty Hearon & Moody. "But she set out on her own."

Likewise, in Beaver's success in law and business, "She's done it all herself," Bartoletti says.

Beaver has built a successful firm, which began as a general practice and became one of the top family law offices in Travis County.

Looking back, Beaver downplays the courage her unconventional choice required and her role in breaking barriers for women.

"I also was officing with attorneys that were practicing other areas of law," she says, "so they were a source of referrals and support."

As a young lawyer, her interest in family law came at an opportune time.

"There were so many things going on in family law. Being on the ground floor ... provided me the opportunity to work on cutting-edge legislation and participate in cases involving complex issues early on," she says. "There were so many more ways you could take a family law practice in a sophisticated direction."

Beaver did that. Her firm — which employs 17 people, including two associate lawyers — was named one of the best boutique law firms in Texas in 2004 by Texas Lawyer magazine.

Over the years, Beaver has established herself as a go-to attorney in family law, known for representing the most high-profile people in Austin.

After several decades of focusing on family law,

Beaver is as passionate about her work as she was when she embarked in that specialty.

"I think there is no other area of the law where an attorney can have the sort of immediate positive impact on a client's life than a family lawyer can have," she says. "People going through a divorce are going through one of the most stressful times ever in their life. And it is our job as attorneys to make sure that this process is less stressful, not more stressful."

Her strategy for reducing that stress is to be on top of details, stay focused on the client's goals and be accessible.

"[I] want to make sure that everyone leaves the process healthier than they came in," she says. "I consider that very, very rewarding."

During her career, Beaver has been criticized for being too aggressive, colleagues say.

"She's sort of famous for being tough," Bartoletti says. "When she started it was so unusual to find those qualities in a woman. But she's really at the top of the game in Austin."

Beaver's work ethic and no-nonsense reputation has earned her the Texas Monthly Super Lawyer Award in 2006-2007.

Beaver has also made a civic mark in Austin.

"She spends an enormous amount of time and energy volunteering," says Sabrina Streusand, of Streusand & Landon LLP, who shares office space with Beaver.

Beaver is on the boards of the Austin Children's Museum, Ballet Austin, Austin Museum of Art, Planned Parenthood of Austin and People's Community Clinic, among others.

"At People's Community Clinic, she's helped with development, bringing in new people and funding," Streusand says. "She has also been instrumental in developing others into future board members and volunteers."

Streusand says Beaver is devoted to the tasks she takes on. "She's extraordinarily well-organized and thoughtful in all of her community efforts. She's a very focused person."

Despite her professional and community résumés, Beaver continues to measure success case by case.

"I see clients doing well after they have moved out of the process, having become stronger both emotionally and financially," she says. "Each time I have achieved that in a case, I feel like it's a proud moment because that's the goal I set for myself at the onset."



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