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10-year tandem

Anderson & Boback makes name representing clients in adoption and military divorce cases

BY JOHN FLYNN ROONEY
Law Bulletin staff writer

In the early 2000s, Kimberly J. Anderson ran her own family law practice in the Loop, focusing on adoptions.

Janice L. Boback was about 80 miles southwest in Ottawa and started representing military troops and their spouses in divorces.

Every so often, the two John Marshall Law School classmates talked over the phone. For a span of about 18 months, they considered merging their practices.

In 2003, they did.

Today, Anderson & Boback is known for its family law practice, and judges count on the firm to act as child representatives in some cases.

The firm features three associates and one part-time attorney — all women. It celebrated its 10th anniversary at a party in its Loop office Thursday that about 100 people attended.

After graduating from John Marshall in 1998, Anderson went to work as an Cook County assistant state's attorney handling child-support matters and appeals. She then handled marketing for a detective service for less than a year before opening her own law practice.

"I tried to run this place myself before (Boback) came and it was difficult," Anderson said.

Anderson's practice "grew so successfully, she decided she needed someone to come and help her," said Boback, who worked at an Ottawa law firm after law school and developed a niche in military-family cases.

"I joined her and it took off

from there."

Anderson regularly represents clients in adoptions, including those involving stepparents and adoption agencies.

About 50 to 60 percent of Boback's practice involves military divorces.

"We're pretty well known in the state of Illinois for having expertise about family law matters involving active and retired members of the military and their spouses," Boback said.

Anderson cites the firm's small size as an attraction for clients.

"When you come to the door, you're going to be working with either (Boback) or me," she said. Unlike at larger firms, "you're not going to get pushed off on somebody who just got out of law school or a junior partner."

In one of their high-profile cases about six years ago, Anderson and Boback represented Rashida Mitchell, the former wife of rap artist Twista. That case settled for a confidential amount on the third day of trial.

"We all work hard toward settlements and we are very conscientious of returning phone calls the day we receive them," she said.

The firm also uses social media, including Facebook and recently started sending messages on Twitter.

"I think because of the movement of social media, we will depend on it more," Boback said. "We will use it as much as we can."

Anderson tries to write on the firm's blog regularly about developments in family law and other matters.



Janice L. Boback cuts a cake made by her law partner, Kimberly J. Anderson, during Thursday's 10-year anniversary celebration of their firm, Anderson & Boback, at the firm's office at 115 S. LaSalle St. *Natalie Battaglia*



(From left) Attorney Julie A. Anderson; Janice L. Boback, a partner at Anderson & Boback; and Jennifer A. Kolbusz, an associate at Anderson & Boback, mingle during the 10-year anniversary celebration of Anderson & Boback at the firm's office on Thursday. *Natalie Battaglia*

For Thursday's anniversary party, Anderson used skills she developed in a previous career as a pastry chef. She made a confetti cake with buttercream frosting.

Lawyer Laura A. Holwell shares office space with Anderson & Boback and has

known Anderson for about 15 years.

"To see a group of strong women together at be successful at (practicing law) is refreshing," Holwell said.

"They are actually interested in resolving the case and not billing the file to death."