

Resolution the focus for family lawyer Williams

By AdvocateDaily.com Staff



Markham family law lawyer [Cheryl Suann Williams](#)' clients are able to bank on her experience resolving many high-conflict, complicated cases and rely on her opinion when it comes to the merits of the case.

“I’m blunt with clients, and I certainly don’t beat around the bush,” Williams, the principal of [Williams Family Lawyers](#), tells [AdvocateDaily.com](#). “I tell them we can be friends when it’s all over — and there are past clients I celebrate birthdays with — but until then I’m there to give it to them straight, which, I believe, is what they pay a lawyer to do.”

“They’re not paying me to be their friend, and it’s always better to hear bad news from me now than to be yelled at by a judge later,” she adds.

Her calm but assertive style has helped Williams develop a reputation as a highly skilled and tough, but resolution-focused practitioner, despite the complexity of many of her files.

“Although I do a great deal of high-conflict cases, I also have a knack for settling them,” says Williams, who is trained in mediation and collaborative family law, and is near completion of a Master's of Law degree in alternative dispute resolution.

Despite knowing she wanted to be a lawyer in her teens, Williams’ path to her dream job was not straightforward.

She only started law school after giving birth to her two children, though she first gained valuable experience as a legal assistant at a reputable law firm working on the public Krever inquiry into Canada’s tainted blood scandal in the 1990s.

After a stint in with corporate litigation, Williams was inspired by her previous experience as a volunteer helping victims of physical and sexual violence at the [Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic](#), and opting to article at the provincial Ministry of the Attorney General, where she got involved in custody and access cases on behalf of the Office of the Children's Lawyer.

After her call to the bar in 2000, she entered private practice, again with a focus on litigation, and since 2001, has devoted her entire career to family law.

Over the years, Williams has accumulated a prestigious list of mentors and business partners, including three sitting family court judges: Justices Phillip Sutherland, Heather McGee and Laura Fryer.

Williams also prides herself on her contribution to the profession, taking an active role in legal groups and mentoring law students and new entrants to the family law bar and acting as an articling principal.

"I love to write and I do quite a few speaking engagements every year," she says.

In addition to writing for the Law Society of Ontario's Bar Admission Course section on divorce law and the [Institute of Law Clerks of Ontario](#), Williams is frequently invited to write and present for the Law Society of Ontario, the Ontario Bar Association, the [Canadian Association of Black Lawyers](#), the Scarborough Women's Centre as well as various community organizations.