



Quarterly E-Newsletter

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Get to Know the Commission: Rick DeMichele

In this edition of the E-Newsletter, we introduce you to Rick DeMichele, who is beginning his third year as a member of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence. Rick practices law in Cherry Hill, New Jersey at DeMichele & DeMichele, PC, and is an active member of the American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence, Family Law Section, Litigation Section and General Practice, Small Firm and Solo Division. He is supported in these endeavors by his wonderful wife and two adorable daughters.

Rick began representing victims of domestic violence by necessity. As a family law attorney, he quickly realized domestic violence is part of the practice and that he needed to know how to handle "DV" cases. He now screens every family law case for domestic violence and tries up to ten domestic violence cases a year. Nevertheless, Rick believes that many family law lawyers do not consider themselves domestic violence lawyers, and do not believe they handle domestic violence cases. The reality is while they may not intentionally "do DV" they represent clients who have experienced domestic violence in their family law cases. One of the greatest challenges the domestic violence community faces is educating and encouraging "family law lawyers" to handle all of their clients' family law needs, including the trial of domestic violence cases.

Rick was interested in becoming a member of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence because the ABA and the Commission share a stellar reputation for excellence in the profession. Since he represents victims of domestic violence, he thought the commission would be a great place for him to learn more about domestic violence, and to give back to the profession. Rick thinks that one of the best aspects of the Commission is the tireless volunteerism of the members. The Commissioners and Liaisons are talented, successful professionals who give generously of their time and expertise. These individuals do this for no money and little to no professional publicity, all in an effort to combat the devastating effects of domestic violence. As a result of his involvement with the Commission, he screens every case for domestic violence – it is a part of every initial client consultation.

Rick wants to highlight the Commission's web site as is a growing resource for all lawyers representing victims of domestic violence. Through the work of the Commission and the contributions of lawyers representing victims, the web site will become even more valuable. Rick encourages you to submit any recommendations or ideas about the website to Ellie Banakis at www.abanet.org/domviol.

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