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## OUTLOOK LOS ANGELES LEGAL

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### Phillips, Lerner, Lauzon & Jamra, L.L.P.

**Family Law Practice Helps Clients Keep Control in Difficult Times**

Attorney Stacy D. Phillips is so knowledgeable about family law, her specialty, that she has written a book, *Divorce: It's All About Control - How to Win the Emotional, Psychological and Legal Wars*.

As a founding partner in Phillips, Lerner, Lauzon & Jamra, L.L.P., hers is an expertise gained from representing many of Los Angeles' richest and most famous – celebrities, entrepreneurs, policy-makers and politicians. The family law firm's four principals – Phillips, Marc Lerner, Peter A. Lauzon and Grace A. Jamra – offer clients highly personalized attention and a customized approach.

"My firm prides itself on trying to resolve cases. That's our first choice," Phillips says. "But the best settlement you can reach comes when the other side knows you're prepared to go to trial."

#### Specializing in Control Issues

For Phillips, a key emphasis is on helping clients understand how to maintain control – especially self-control – during emotionally wrenching divorce proceedings.

"Let me give you an example," she says. "I had a business executive as a client who was used to snapping his fingers all the time and having things be done for him. I warned him, 'You're going to feel very much out of control. Your spouse is facing the most important negotiation or trial of her life and she's going to take her time. You're not going to be in control of that.'"

Because Phillips is so sought after in Los Angeles, where new trends often emerge first, she's in a position to quickly respond whenever family law intersects with a changing society. For instance, Phillips has developed two subspecialties – working men who seek custody of their children and women who are the primary breadwinners.



Stacy D. Phillips

Such scenarios can raise some interesting and challenging control issues. "Generally, when a woman ends up being the primary breadwinner, it's not because she wanted to," Phillips says.

"Often, she married somebody on an equal par and leapfrogged over him. Then maybe he started staying home and didn't really take care of the kids. Maybe he played some sports or fooled around with the computer. So she says she wants to get divorced because she wants an equal partner, and then she runs the risk of losing custody and paying support. She doesn't feel in control."

Phillips sees herself as a "partner lawyer" who patiently and supportively helps clients realize what's best for them. "Some attorneys call themselves gladiators – they're there to fight every case," she says. "I see my job as that of educating my clients in order to determine their specific needs."

"They may be reluctant or afraid to do certain things. I can give them the support system that allows them to be more assertive," she says. "On the other hand, they may be too aggressive when it's not in their best interest to be, especially when you consider what a legal war can cost. Spending money on legal fees just to get back at someone is ridiculous."

#### Actively Supports Charities

An important part of her firm's practice is giving back to the community. The firm has created an Adopt-A-Center program to aid local nonprofit organizations serving families and children. Recipients include: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, The Free Arts for Abused Children Foundation, Children Uniting Nations and Break the Cycle.

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