



*Attorney
Gina Barry*

By Melissa Harris,
Senior Staff Writer

She was named Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly's "Up and Coming Lawyer 2004," one of only five lawyers practicing less than ten years in the state of Massachusetts to earn such a distinction. She was also recently honored as Business Woman of the Year by the Women Business Owner's Alliance of Pioneer Valley, served as lecturer for many of events and venues, and contributed authorship in her areas of expertise. "I am one who works hard without expecting any fanfare because my sense of satisfaction and self-worth emanates from within, but it has been an amazing experience to receive the accolades of my peers," says Gina Barry from Bacon & Wilson, P.C. Attorneys at Law of her recent accolades. Barry is an associate member of the firm's estate planning/elder law department and maintains additional specialization in Estate Planning (including Estate Planning for animal owners), Probate Administration, Probate Litigation, Guardianships, Conservatorships, Asset Protection and Long Term Care Planning and Residential Real Estate.

A product of Western Massachusetts

Hard working, down to earth, and personable, Barry holds a strong regard for her position and ongoing commitment in helping people plan for their future. Gina Barry was born and raised in Holyoke, having lived in the same house since she was only nine months old. The daughter of a waitress and a welder and youngest of four children, Barry's ambitions led her to become the first in her family to complete college. Deciding to attend Mount Holyoke College, Barry earned an Associates of Arts and Science in 1994 and went on to Westfield State College where she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science.

The lure of law school pulled Barry in from a private need to enter a profession that would allow her to engage her

intellect and afford her the ability to help people in their time of need. Due to family circumstances, the failing of her father's health, during her undergraduate years at Westfield State College, Barry made a decision upon graduation to stay in the area. Throughout her undergraduate education, Barry had helped with the financial strains caused by her father's illness by maintaining three part time jobs and felt a responsibility and importance in being there for her family.

To meet her educational calling, Barry submitted a single application to law school, applying only to Springfield's Western New England College School of Law. Impressed with the school's level of personal attention, the quality of the faculty, and encouraged by the praise that she heard from student currently attending the institution, Barry was assured in her decision. Barry graduated from Western New England College School of Law Cum Laude with her Juris Doctor in 1999. Through it all, Barry firmly states, "I believe that I am a stronger and more grounded person today for having had to work so hard to be where I am today."

Today, Barry sees that her professional quest has been full filled. "My practice area is very sophisticated, and the intellectual challenge never ends," says Barry. "I take great satisfaction in the peace of mind that I can provide to my clients when they are experiencing difficult life changes."

The road to Bacon & Wilson

While at Western New England College, Barry obtained a judicial internship with U.S. Magistrate Judge Kenneth Neiman as well as a Law Clerk position with Bacon & Wilson. Upon completion of law school, Barry took on a one-year contract as a judicial clerk for the Massachusetts Superior Court. During the end of this tenure, it was Bacon & Wilson who contacted Barry on her interest in a position in the Planning Department. "And the rest is history," says Barry who started as an associate attorney at Bacon and Wilson the day after her clerkship commenced.

"Working at Bacon and Wilson is a dream come true," says Barry, who enjoys working with a firm that operates as a team and treats its members as one family. "The partners at this firm show a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for each other, and the environment is one of support and concern," says Barry about her daily working environment. Her ability to develop such a large area of specialization can be attributed to the independence sustained to her by the firm and their continuous support in helping her reach her own business goals. Such advocacy and encouragement has allowed her to develop the practice of her choosing as well as the ability to establish her own niche in estate planning. "I am truly uncertain whether another firm would have supported my idea for developing a niche in estate planning for pets," says Barry of the venture that has sanctioned her to bring her love of animals into her law practice. A venture that has also proven profitable.

Civil minded

Barry's affinity for the firm also extends to their support of civic activities. Unlike other firms who may frown on time away from the office, Barry states "Bacon & Wilson not only supports my community involvement, but Bacon & Wilson encourages it as well. I have always had the desire to contribute to my community, and I am delighted that I practice law with like-minded individuals."



Currently, Barry has many affiliations and responsibilities beyond her scope of work at Bacon & Wilson. She is acting First Vice President for the Business and Professional Women of Greater Springfield and acting Steering Committee Member for the Western Mass. Elder Care Professionals Association. In addition she is Chair of the Cheryl Reed Memorial Loan Fund for the Women Business Owners Alliance as well as Co-Chairperson of the Communications Committee for Women's Partnership. Not to mention her membership with the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, The Estate Planning Council of Hampden County, Connecticut Bar Association Hampden County Bar Association, Meadows Homes Human Rights, and Business Network International.

"I love all of my civic involvement," says Barry. "Often, I am involved because I feel like I am making a difference in my community or in the lives of others. Other times, I am involved because I think it's important to build a network of reliable professionals to whom I can refer my clients when the need arises. Finally, I am involved because I enjoy the social interaction, and I enjoy making new friends." Barry looks at her numerous involvements as social opportunities rather than extensions of work and claims that this outlook has given her a profound enjoyment that's helped her achieve a sense of balance.

Finding a balance

With all of her responsibilities within Bacon & Wilson combined with her out of work commitments, Barry has little spare time. However, when she does, she enjoys socializing with her friends as well as taking care of her animals; a dog, cat, fish and birds. In addition, she loves to travel, admitting, "I am known for my many adventures." Barry is currently planning a safari to Kenya in May of 2006.

While such balance between personal and professional life can get disturbed in such a high demanding profession, Barry's work with her business coach has taught her ways in which to make these times "far and few between." Barry credits former business coach, Becky Castro's guidance in helping her get through the growing pains associated with the success of her practice. Says Barry, "She helped me to develop systems to maintain balance in my life so that I can avoid burnout and offer my clients my best at all times."

Three words to live by

"Now is perfect." Barry's favorite three words. 1. When it comes to determining the best time to start a project that she has been procrastinating. 2. When things are not going as planned to remind herself be thankful for the current experience and for the building of her character that results from adversity.

Now is perfect also, as Barry couldn't be happier with her current position. Barry attributes much of her success to the guidance of Attorney Hyman G. Darling, who is one of the most prominent estate planning lawyers in the state of Massachusetts and head of the Estate Planning Department at Bacon & Wilson. "I realized early on in my practice that to be the best, you have to find the best and then model yourself and your business after that example," says Barry.

She also credits her work with the Anthony Robbins Company in helping her break through what she describes as "all of the limiting beliefs that I may have had in the past that held me back from attaining the level of success that I now enjoy." Barry truly believes that she can achieve any goal that she can dream up.

The future holds

"The best part of my position is the true feeling of satisfaction I get when I realize that I am making a difference in the lives of my clients," says Barry, who sees her future in Bacon & Wilson with the hopes that in as soon as five years she can obtain partner with the firm. Looking even further down the road, she sights a possible pursuit of judgeship with the Probate and Family Court. And as far as her affection for animals is concerned, "I also expect that I will have taken many steps closer to establishing a non-profit corporation for the purpose of administering an equine rescue for abused, abandoned and neglected horses," says Barry.

Comments or questions, contact Melissa Harris at MHarris@VBOmagazine.com. ♦

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