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Sherr Puttmann Akins Lamb PC: Personalizing the Practice of Family Law

Prior to forming the family law firm Sherr Puttmann Akins Lamb PC in 2010, Megan Sherr, Catherine Puttmann, Tanya Akins, and David Lamb were colleagues at a larger domestic relations practice in the Denver area. At the time, the practice was focused on adding attorneys, but Sherr, Puttmann, Akins, and Lamb found this approach to be at odds with the personal nature of family law.

"We felt that a big law firm wouldn't be able to take care of the emotional needs of someone going through a divorce," Sherr says. "So we decided to take the leap and open a firm where we would be able to provide family law services tailored to our individual client's needs, in a small firm setting so each client feels their family matters are protected, advocated for by a team of experienced and caring professionals and kept private."

Puttmann adds: "From the time they walk through the door to the time they leave, our clients are taken care of—they feel like they're part of a 'village' that is helping them through this difficult time."

In many ways, the firm's success is a testament to the shareholders' founding vision of a more personal practice. "We started this firm during the worst economic downturn in history," Akins says, "and two and a half years later, it was definitely the right decision for all of us, but most importantly, for our clients."

Lamb attributes the firm's success to the enthusiasm of its members: "It's very rewarding to have a whole group of people here who enjoy coming to work. There's a lot of burnout in family law, so we all have a huge sense of pride in what we've accomplished."

Before focusing on family law, the firm's shareholders all worked in the public sector, acquiring skills that have transferred to their current practice: Akins spent eight years as a licensed clinical social worker, conducting custody evaluations and providing courtroom testimony on her findings and recommendations. Sherr, Puttmann, and Lamb, meanwhile, worked for a number of years as district attorneys—Sherr and Lamb in Denver, and Puttmann in Douglas County.

Puttmann says: "Both Megan and I had an opportunity to focus on juvenile law during our D.A. careers, which has helped

in family law, because juvenile prosecution is focused more on the rehabilitation of the family unit. Not to mention, the dynamics of a family going through a crisis because of a criminal action are very similar to those of a family going through a crisis because of a divorce action."

While Lamb also handled juvenile law as a district attorney, his main focus was on prosecuting major crimes against children.

He notes, "As a D.A., you see the impact a crime has on a victim's life, and the experience in assisting those victims has turned out to be good practice for helping people through the trauma of divorce."

Sherr Puttmann Akins Lamb PC prides itself on being a full-service family law firm with extensive experience in cases involving complex financial and custody issues. The firm's attorneys have more than 40 years of combined experience in settlement negotiations, courtroom litigation, mediation, and arbitration.

"We've handled cases involving high-asset trusts and businesses, as well as sensitive mental health issues," Sherr says. "No case is too big for us to handle, but we also believe that no case is too small to have high-quality legal representation."

The firm has been recognized as one of the top family law firms in Colorado by U.S. News – Best Lawyers "Best

Law Firms," and all of its shareholders have received "superb" or "very good" ratings from the online lawyer directory Avvo. "Given that we've only been open for two and a half years, we are very proud of our 'Best Law Firms' recognition," Puttmann says. "It reflects our strength as a law firm."

Sherr and Akins have both been named in *Rising Stars*, which is published by *Super Lawyers*, and Akins and Puttmann have provided advice on Castle Rock Radio's *Life After Divorce*. Lamb, meanwhile, serves as an instructor and speaker for a number of organizations, including the Family Law Section of the Colorado Bar Association and the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. The firm also helps those in need through its pro bono practice.

"People sometimes ask why we would want to be family law attorneys, but it's very rewarding to help people work through their divorce-related life changes and see them come out after it is over healthier and happier," Akins says.



from left to right: Catherine H. Puttmann, Megan M. Sherr, David A. Lamb and Tanya L. Akins