Cathy Wettlaufer

Partner

Buffalo
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Education

- University at Buffalo School of Law, *Magna Cum Laude*, JD
- Mt. Holyoke College, BA

Practices & Industries

- Trusts & Estates

Admitted to Practice

- New York

Biography

Cathy is the former chair of Barclay Damon's Trusts & Estates Practice Area. With over 30 years of legal experience, Cathy understands the unique needs of her clients, whether dealing with complex family-business succession plans; preparing wills, health-care proxies, and powers-of-attorney; or managing contentious—and, often, litigated—family-estate administration.

Cathy never loses sight of the significant emotional component involved in these sensitive matters. She welcomes the opportunity to connect with her clients and their families and to partner with them and their advisors to achieve solutions that not only meet their needs, but provide peace of mind and security for their future.

Bar Associations

- Bar Association of Erie County
- New York State Bar Association, Former Professional Discipline Committee Member

Selected Memberships & Affiliations

- Barclay Damon’s Women’s Forum
- Estate Analysts of Western New York
- Financial Planning Counselors of Western NY
- Chief Judge's Task Force on Attorney Professionalism and Conduct, Former Member
- Eighth Judicial District of the State of NY Grievance Committee, Former Member
- New York State Bar Association Estate and Trust Section, Former Member for the Eighth Judicial District

Representative Experience

- Designs, completes, and maintains estate plans for clients ranging from multimillionaires to young couples with children. Handles family, business-succession, and tax issues.
- Advises clients on trust and estates administration, including tax and construction issues as well as fiduciary duties to beneficiaries with respect to investment policy and distributions to interested parties.
- Practices in Surrogate's Court regarding intestate and probate matters, contested and voluntary accountings, right of election for surviving spouses, adoptions, kinship proceedings, and various statutory proceedings to protect beneficiaries' interests and locate estate assets.
- Plans for clients and their families with special needs, including guardianship proceedings for minors and adults and supplemental-needs trusts.
- Creates and adapts health-care proxies, living wills and powers-of-attorney to clients' wishes and situations.
- Advises clients on issues regarding the elderly, including long-term care insurance and placement, capacity, and court-supervised guardianship.

Prior Experience

- Saperston & Day LLP, Partner
- Hiscock & Barclay, LLP, Partner

Selected Community Activities

- King Charter School, Board of Trustees President
- University at Buffalo School of Law GOLD Group, Founder and Former President
- Western New York Planned-Giving Consortium, Founding Member
- Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Former Board of Directors Chair and Director
- United Way Campaign, Former Attorney-Division Chair

Selected Honors

- New York State Bar Association, Empire State Counsel® Honoree, 2023
- *The Best Lawyers in America*®: Trusts and Estates, 2011–2024; Buffalo "Lawyer of the Year": Trusts and Estates, 2012
- Selected to *Super Lawyers* Upstate New York: Estate & Probate, 2008–2010, 2012–2022
- *Buffalo Business First*, Woman of Influence, 2003
- Martindale-Hubbell AV Preeminent Peer Review Rated for Very High to Preeminent Ethical Standards and Legal Ability

Selected Speaking Engagements

- New York State Bar Association, “Ethics Panel Issues Surrounding Execution of Documents”
- Erie Institute of Law Guardian Ad Litem Seminar
- New York State Bar Association, “Everything You Wanted to Know About Estate Planning (but Were Afraid to Ask)”
- Erie County Bar Association, “Brush Up Your Surrogate’s Practice: A Review of Topics of Relevance”
- New York State Bar Association, “Dealing With Your Client’s Retirement Assets” CLE, Chair and Moderator