New Partner Spotlight: Matthew Nicodemo

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For Matthew Nicodemo, estate and trust litigation is about more than resolving legal disputes. It's about uncovering the facts, protecting people's interests, and helping families navigate difficult and often sensitive situations involving the estates and trusts of loved ones. Whether addressing questions about the validity of a will, disputes involving executors or trustees, or concerns about how an estate is being administered, Matt takes an investigative and thoughtful approach to understanding each situation and positioning his clients for the best possible outcome. With a practice focused on trust, estate, and guardianship matters, Matt brings a deep understanding of this specialized area of law and a commitment to helping clients navigate complex issues with clarity and confidence. As we recognize his recent promotion to partner, we asked Matt to share what first drew him to estate and trust litigation, what people might not realize about his practice, and what becoming a partner means to him.

What first drew you to estate and trust litigation?

I clerked for the Honorable Menelaos W. Toskos, J.S.C. (Ret.), when he sat in the Chancery Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey. Judge Toskos' docket included general equity, foreclosure, and probate matters. The "Probate Part" cases were the most interesting to me. They ranged from will contests and fiduciary disputes to less familiar questions involving lost or handwritten wills. Part of what drew me in was the underlying body of law, which traces back to the early English courts, evolved through New Jersey's historical Prerogative Courts, and has continued to mature in our current Chancery Courts. That clerkship shaped the direction I took in private practice, where I have concentrated on trust, estate, and guardianship matters ever since.

What might surprise people about estate litigation and how you approach it?

People sometimes picture estate litigation starting with something like the will-reading scene in the film Knives Out, where a family gathers in one room while a lawyer reveals who gets what. This setting makes for great drama in an Agatha Christie novel or a Rian Johnson film, but it is not realistic. We generally do not see attorneys gathering family for a will reading. Many times the content of a will is already known to those closest to the decedent, and otherwise, knowledge of the will is learned through our court system's usual notice process.

It may also surprise people that the legal work in this area of practice is often highly investigative. For example, where a will is disputed, we generally work to determine the testator's true intent by piecing together the family dynamic and reconstructing decisions made months or years earlier from medical and financial records, witness testimony, and the drafting attorney's file. While most estate disputes resolve before trial, I find that starting this investigation early and preparing each case as if it will ultimately go to trial is what puts my clients in the best position to reach a favorable resolution.

When should someone speak with an estate litigator rather than wait to see whether a dispute resolves itself?

It is worth talking to counsel early, as soon as something seems "off," rather than waiting to see how it unfolds. In an estate administration matter, that may mean an executor or trustee who is not providing timely or meaningful information. On its own, that does not prove wrongdoing or mean a lawsuit is necessary, but it can be a reason to seek guidance. It need not mean being litigious or raising a dispute. Sometimes it simply helps to understand the process with the assistance of counsel so that administering the estate can proceed efficiently. Another reason to consult early is that evidence gets harder to gather the longer one waits. For example, records can become more difficult to obtain, assets may already be distributed or dissipated, and deadlines can narrow the available options.

What does becoming a partner mean to you?

It is a meaningful milestone, personally and professionally. I feel fortunate to have built a career around work that continues to interest me. I built a strong foundation in my area of practice early on and have grown it over the past decade, and I am proud to have that recognized by my firm.

Becoming partner reflects the confidence my colleagues have placed in me, and I hope it offers clients some added reassurance when they bring me a difficult problem. I also know I did not get here on my own. I have benefited from generous mentors, supportive colleagues, and the trust of clients, and I am grateful for all of it as I continue building my practice in New Jersey and New York.

Related People



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