

MOVING UP

Ellen S. Morris

Managing partner in Elder Law Associates, P.A.

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Name: Ellen S. Morris.

Distinction: Managing partner in Elder Law Associates, P.A.

Place of business: Boca Raton.

Recent accomplishments: Seniors struggling with Medicaid caps and financial decisions in a tough economy turn to people like **Ellen Morris** at Elder Law Associates for help.

Morris, a principal in the Boca Raton firm, works exclusively with seniors and adult children of aging parents. She reviews their financial, legal and health issues, makes recommendations and puts a plan in writing. Then it's up to potential clients to decide to how to proceed.

Medicaid caps have increased slightly, but they are still low enough to make it difficult for most seniors to qualify, she said. A couple's assets cannot exceed \$92,660 to be eligible.

"It's nearly impossible for most seniors to meet the

Medicaid caps set by the government," Morris said. "We help them cut through the issues and protect their financial position." Trusts are restructured, and long-term care insurance is recommended.

"I've always had a real fondness and appreciation for seniors and an interest in the value of their lives," she said. "And I don't believe because we reach senior age we can't still control our lives."

She met her husband and partner, Stuart R. Morris, when they were students at the University of Florida. They're members of the National Academy of Elder Law. She has practiced elder law for four years and plans to be certified in the field (her husband already is) after the required five years.

Morris was born in New York but has lived in Florida most her life. She chose law as a career, she said, because she felt a lawyer had the power to make an impact on society.

After law school, she spent three years as an assistant state attorney in Dade County under Janet Reno. She left the office to start a family, and now has three daughters.

Elder Law Associates, incorporated this year, offers Medicaid and nursing home planning for people 60 and over. It also offers financial preservation planning; durable power of attorney; living will;

designation of health care surrogate; long-term care insurance planning; and geriatric care management services.

The firm is AV-rated and employs four attorneys and nine staff members at locations in Boca Raton (headquarters), Aventura, Tamarac, Weston and West Palm Beach.

"I love having a satisfied client," Morris said. "(Elder law) is so different than other areas of law. It's a positive experience. I get many, many thank-you cards. It's a feel-good thing for me."

Education: B.A., English; J.D., University of Florida.

Age: 38.

Personal: Married to Stuart R. Morris, an attorney and her business partner. They live in Parkland with their three daughters, Risa, 11, Brooke, 9, and Alana, 6.

Hobbies: Exercising, biking, traveling and charity work, including being a docent for a school art program.

Career highlight: "Forming Elder Law Associates, because it's the first partnership I'm a principal of and because I'm fortunate to enjoy what I do."

Quote: "Aging can be graceful with proper preparation." - *Mary Thurwachter*

Illustration: PHOTO (B&W)

CHRIS MATULA/Staff Photographer

Photo caption: Attorney Ellen Morris and Elder Law Associates in Boca Raton cater to those 60 and over, providing Medicaid and nursing home planning in addition to other services tailored to seniors.