

NOT YOUR ORDINARY ATTORNEY- STACEY R. WALTERS



I was raised by two wonderful parents, William ("Billy") and Donna Riley, in the quaint town of Hillsborough, North Carolina. Growing up, I wanted to do everything: Girl Scouts; tap dance; ballet; cheerleading; track; theater; ceramics; water skiing and tennis, just to name a few. Early on I found that I loved helping other people. At the age of 13, I began volunteering at the OCIM thrift shop and later, at the Ronald McDonald House. I was instilled with a strong work ethic by my parents from an early age. By the time I was 16, I was working part-time at Duke Medical Center where I stayed for almost 9 years.

After graduating from Orange High School in Hillsborough, North Carolina, I attended Elon University, majoring in Biology. Looking to spread my love for community service, I helped found the first "service" sorority on Elon's campus--Epsilon Sigma Alpha. While I intended to go to medical school after college, I changed my mind after sitting as an alternate juror on a murder trial when I was 19 years old! I fell in love with the legal arena and the excitement and constant challenge of advocating for others!

After graduating Cum Laude from Elon University in 1992, I married my high school sweetheart and soulmate, Roland. While he was busy farming, I stayed active in the community, volunteering with the Make-A-Wish Foundation to help make the wishes of terminally ill children come true. We left my husband's family farm for Lansing, Michigan, where I then attended Thomas M. Cooley Law School, one of the largest law schools in the nation. I volunteered in the Elder Law Clinic and was an officer in the Student Government Association. I was an assistant editor of the Law Review and successfully argued on two National Moot Court Teams, among other accomplishments. While I had fun, I also worked hard and graduated law school in the top one-third of my class.

After passing the Michigan State Bar, I went on to clerk for an amazing judge who really taught me what being a lawyer was all about! Since I was accustomed to working longer work weeks, I became a litigation lawyer by day and a floral designer by night--a passion that I found before law school. I sought out causes allowing for me to volunteer my time within my community including Big Brothers Big Sisters and Junior League. Additionally, I served on the Michigan State Bar Character and Fitness Committee. On Saturdays you could find me connecting with the community through "Christ in Action" events, assisting by handing out free water or hot chocolate at parades, or other similar functions.

In 2005, after moving back to the family farm in Efland, North Carolina, I began practicing law in Greensboro, North Carolina, at the law firm of Teague, Rotenstreich, Stanaland, Fox and Holt. Shortly after, sadly, my father-in-law passed away. He had an older Will from 1968 that left his family in a mess--one that ripped the family apart! The highlight of that year though, was the birth of our amazing son, Evan. Then, in 2008, we were blessed with our beautiful daughter, Shayla. Shayla was born with a heart defect and when she was 5-months old, her heart stopped unexpectedly. As a result, she suffered a severe brain injury. She was left disabled and medically fragile. For me, it was a calling to focus my practice on preparing and protecting families for the unexpected life events and for the necessary end-of-life preparation: estate planning and trusts.

I left Greensboro for Mebane, North Carolina, where I opened my own law practice that included estate planning and probate. Later, as our values were aligned, I joined the firm of Rabalais Law, a multi-state law firm that focused solely on estate planning and helping people protect their families and assets. Then, in the summer of 2016, several of my partners and I broke off and re-organized our practice, which is now re-branded and known

as Thomas-Walters, PLLC. Five managing partners (including myself), along with our associate attorneys, serve multiple states across the country. We have one focus--making estate planning and estate settlement comprehensive, yet simple and carefree, in order to ensure a family does not suffer through life changes.

In 2018, the unexpected happened once again when the Lord whisked our beloved Shayla away to heaven. While there is nothing that can replace the loss of a loved one, it has only strengthened the commitment of our practice to making sure that every family finds peace of mind before the unexpected occurs.

Our firm's success is built on engaging with every client, prospective client, professional and advisor on a personal level and meeting their needs in a compassionate and meaningful way. We build a lifetime relationship with our clients while keeping in contact, free of charge, and by providing them with the comfort of knowing their estate plan. Our attorneys publicly speak on probate, estate planning, and wills and trusts more than 50 times a month. We schedule thousands of free consultations annually. We distribute more than 200 legal guides a month that give meaningful insight to those seeking knowledge on these matters. You see, we all know that education is key to families making the best decisions, and we love sharing knowledge with all whom we meet.

I am a member of the North Carolina Bar, and am actively licensed and in good standing. I am a member of the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), the Elder Counsel and the Society of Financial Services Professionals (SFSP). In 2018, I was awarded the "10 Best Attorneys for Exceptional and Outstanding Client Services" by the American Institute of Legal Counsel. My unique perspective as a special-needs parent, coupled with my caring heart, drives me and our firm to educate and help families all over the country.

To me, nothing seems more unfair than for a family to lose all they have worked so hard for, especially after working so hard and paying for years into a government system that was intended to provide "*...a comprehensive social insurance system covering all major personal economic hazards with a special emphasis on unemployment and old age insurance.*" (Pres. Roosevelt Exec. Order #6765, 1934) There must be a simpler, better way, and yes, it is all about learning what we don't know, so everyone can make the best decisions for end-of-life planning. After all, aren't we all called to be good stewards of what we have been given? My grandmother once said: "*I've been getting old since the day I was born.*" Nothing rang truer than those words. Certainly, none of us know when our time will come. We all need a plan, and I truly consider myself privileged to be able to assist families throughout Raleigh, Charlotte, Huntersville, Cornelius, Cary, Wake Forest, Fuquay Varina, Franklinton, Holly Springs, Apex, Pinehurst, Morrisville, Durham, Chapel Hill, Pittsboro, Hillsborough, Efland, Mebane, Graham, Burlington, Haw River, Elon, Roxboro, Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem and all of North Carolina!

Best Always,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stacy R. Walters". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.