

Renee Marie Smith, Esq. PA

Innovative Legal Solutions at the Highest Level

YEARS IN BUSINESS:

Established 2007

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 5

NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: 3

If you're looking for a real estate lawyer whose team is committed to a core set of values that guides them in their connections with clients and the communities they serve, look no further than Renee M. Smith, Esq. PA. The firm currently boasts five employees and three locations: the main office in Jupiter, Naples and Dania Beach. Smith said she passed the Florida Bar in 1997 and opened her own practice in 2007. She's been practicing in Palm Beach County for the last decade and the whole practice is focused on real estate. She has two divisions — the transactional division, which does closings and prepares mortgages, and real estate litigation, which does the enforcement of agreements as they relate to real estate and foreclosure of mortgages.



NICK GARCIA/COURTESY PHOTO

What is the most significant change you've seen in your industry over the last year? What improvements, innovations or changes do you foresee in your industry?

"I've seen a lot of changes, particularly over the last couple of years. The legal industry has finally caught up in technology due to COVID. It's an industry that used to be predominantly paper driven and now it's almost entirely gone digital. Because of COVID, the courts have been able to streamline 80% of what's required in hearings through videoconferencing solutions such as Zoom and Team. And only the most critical portions of litigation — which would be trials and evidentiary hearings — are conducted in person. These advancements don't just benefit the attorneys but the clients as well. Also, the Supreme Court of Florida has begun to address the large influx of new residents into the state who, of course, bring in more litigation. They've added an appellate court, more judges and have incorporated technology to improve the legal system. They have recognized needs more quickly and responsibly because of technological advances. So, I have a very positive outlook toward the future of the courts in Florida as well as the people who practice in them."

How are you responding to changes in the local economy?

"Developers see a lot of opportunity in Palm Beach County, whereas the southern counties of Broward and Miami-Dade are pretty much constructed out. Therefore, I believe in the coming years we'll continue to see in Palm Beach County a much more stable real estate market

Renee Marie Smith, ESQ (Photo styled by Elysze Held)

with a good balance of commercial real estate and year-round residents than in the southern two counties. Also, over the last decade I've noticed a welcome improvement in ancillary real estate services such as Realtors, appraisers and surveyors. This is so important for the growth of the real estate economy in Palm Beach County, as there is increased growth with new homes and new businesses that support those homes. So, with all that, I believe the positive trajectory of Palm Beach County is going to include some very stable growth in our industry."

Name the top three elements or practices that have been absolutely critical in the success of your business for 2023.

"Flexibility, being strategy-based and having the foresight to open my main office in Palm Beach County. I say flexibility based on my understanding of the real estate market and my quickness to react to its fluctuations. It enables me to pivot for my clients, giving commercial clients advice as to where to invest and helping residential clients navigate the limited inventory of houses for sale, while helping them avoid overpaying for a house. When I say I'm a strategy-based attorney, it means I help clients determine the outcome they want and create a plan to achieve that outcome. As for opening my Palm Beach County office, I see this area of Florida being so important for the next decade. And I believe my 25 years of experience has given me the ability to assist my clients and grow my business at the same time."

Within the context of your current marketing/promotional strategy, how do you differentiate your company from your competitors?

"I operate a boutique law firm, which makes it unique. I really believe that not only do my clients select me, but I select the clients I fit. For me to grow my business — especially in Palm Beach County, where there is a more sophisticated clientele — that's very important. And I have seen, because I'm a strategic attorney who's able to explain to the client exactly what outcome I believe will result to their benefit, that differentiates me from other attorneys, who I believe are more reactionary than strategic. As a result, I've been able to carve out a very successful niche for myself."

What's your company's superpower?

"I would say it's my overall strategic approach, a concept I learned from my grandfather. He taught me you have to know where you want to end up when planning any kind of enterprise. And almost any time I work with any client, that's one of the first things I try to find out from them. I ask them, what result do you want? Give me that answer and we'll create a plan to get you there."

What will you base your success on for 2023?

"Working with clients with whom I plan to have a long-term relationship. And so far in the first half of this year, I've been able to do that. Not only to continually and successfully work with clients I've had for the last decade, but taking on new cases and transactions for clients I believe

I'll be able to take with me for the next 10 years."

How are you growing and developing your employee skills this year?

"I've encouraged them and have had them take additional courses for training outside the scope of the office. I always believe when you hear the perspectives of how others in the industry operate, that improves your own office. Sometimes learning to do something only one way can be limiting and creates a stale office environment. So, I encourage my staff to take paid time and training outside the office so we can always learn new and innovative ways of doing business, always working with the latest technologies. There are also a lot of options open to law firms these days to subcontract out different portions of transactions or work for my litigation division, which have resulted in a cost-effective solution that has helped not only my office staff but my clients as well."

What wise words would you tell young people entering the work force today?

"Keep the human connection. The generation entering the workforce today has the advantage over my generation of growing up with the internet and technology. They understand it more intrinsically than does my generation. But one of the things that's lost in that, and is so important in the legal trade, is the relationship between you and your client. No amount of technology can replace the credibility or the trust you build with your client through interpersonal connection. That requires phone calls and communication beyond text messages." ■

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Real Estate Law • Contracts
Consulting • Business Law

"Renee was fantastic. Responsive, direct, to-the-point, and fair. She walked me through an unfortunate real estate transaction. I would use her again!"

Barbara Kuhn
Pittsburgh, PA

3,000+
Happy Customers



Renee Marie Smith, Esq.
REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY



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