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# Thriving Together

**Wife and husband team bring nuts and bolts and blood and guts to their plaintiffs law firm.**



*John Ramey, Christa Ramey, and Schyler Katz sit for a portrait on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 in Los Angeles, CA.*

Longtime plaintiffs' attorney Christa H. Ramey doesn't mind acknowledging she still gets butterflies before the start of a trial.

"I'm always intimidated the first day," the Ramey Law, PC partner said, chuckling some. "I'm always nauseous and feel the weight of what's about to happen. I think most lawyers will be honest with you about that. ... It's like walking on a high wire without a net. "

Ramey's husband John F. Ramey, the Los Angeles firm's founding partner, agrees with his wife.

"Any trial lawyer that says they don't get nervous about a trial either is not being 100% honest or doesn't have the passion necessarily to try to the case," he said. "I don't care if you've tried 50 cases, 100 cases, if you still don't get a little bit of that excitement and that adrenaline rush, then you might want to think about doing something else."

Christa Ramey, who's handled plaintiffs' work for 20 years, and John Ramey, who spent the bulk of his 30-year legal career on the defense side, started dating 16 years ago and have been married for 12. The couple started practicing together at Ramey Law in 2016.

The firm handles a lot of personal injury work today, and Christa has created a practice niche in school bullying matters. John, meanwhile, has long handled construction defect cases, but he now primarily works on the plaintiffs' side.

"I joke that he's the nuts and bolts of the firm, and I'm the blood and guts," Christa Ramey explained, laughing. "Personal injury is kind of my thing, and his is construction."

Teaming up as business and legal partners wasn't a difficult decision, according to Christa Ramey, who said she and her husband both grew up in Dallas, Texas and still root for the Cowboys.

"Our goals are the same," she explained. "Make sure we're provided for, our children are provided for, that they get the best education, ... and we have a wonderful life together and hopefully a great retirement."

John Ramey said he and his wife have tried cases together in the past, but they don't do that often, focusing instead on their own areas of expertise.

"We certainly support each other every way we can," he said, describing his wife as an excellent attorney who's really helped him better understand how to represent plaintiffs.

"We're a great team, but for the most part, she tries the cases she's been lead attorney on, and I try the cases I'm the lead attorney on."

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The roots of the three-attorney firm's school bullying litigation efforts really stretch back to difficulties the Ramey's daughter endured at the hands of former friends on social media. While navigating those hardships as a parent, Christa found herself researching cyber-bullying legislation Gov. Jerry Brown signed, and she wrote a blog post about the new law, which she said led to "a lot of phone calls" and eventually cases.

"I just found representing children, particularly those who are disabled, is some of the most rewarding work," Christa Ramey said. "Kids are so honest. ... I've had other clients lie to me. Never a kid, and when they're hurt - I guess it's the parent instincts in you - you just want to protect them."

In January, Ramey filed a government tort claim against the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District on behalf of the mother of an 8-year-old boy, alleging the district failed to protect the boy from bullying at Grant Elementary School in Santa Monica. From August 2017 to December 2019, students kicked, spat at and verbally abused the boy daily, according to the complaint, which also alleged civil rights violations.

"I don't have negative feelings toward schools or school districts," Ramey said, noting her mother was a teacher. "But I think there is this mentality that has existed since the dawn of public education that boys will be boys and girls will be girls and let them sort it out. That may work in a significant minority of cases, but sometimes in the worst of the cases, kids kill themselves."

Ramey said California school districts are mandated to provide bullying prevention training to teachers, but that often doesn't happen.

"The education code requires it, but it's not done," she said. "I figure we wouldn't have seatbelts in our cars if it wasn't for lawyers and lawsuits. Maybe we can help with cyber-bullying and physical abuse on school campuses if we just keep plucking away."

Woodland Hills personal injury defense attorney Robert A. Morgenstern, who has opposed John and Christa Ramey a number of times over the years, described them as great attorneys.

"They're easy to work with," Morgenstern said. "They both practice with civility, and we can either get a case resolved, or we agree to disagree."

Beverly Hills plaintiffs' attorney Paul R. Kiesel, who has known Christa Ramey for two decades, opposed John Ramey in a construction site fall case seven years ago.

"His ethics were spectacular," Kiesel said. "If he said something, he always lived by the words he spoke. He was trustworthy, and a worthy adversary."

Kiesel said Christa Ramey has been "an active and remarkable leader within the plaintiff bar here in Los Angeles," and he described her as "everything you'd hope for in plaintiff attorney."

Ramey Law managing attorney Schyler S. Katz, who joined the firm in 2017, said John and Christa Ramey have been terrific mentors, and she said Christa has become very much like a big sister.

"I definitely feel like we've grown to be like family," Katz said of the firm.

Married to a lawyer herself, Katz said she has a lot of admiration for how John and Christa Ramey pull off their business partnership as married spouses.

"I couldn't do it," Katz said, laughing about partnering with her attorney husband. "We'd drive each other crazy."

Christa Ramey insisted she and her husband's personalities provide an important balance.

"I'm the one to go from zero to lose my temper, and he's always the one that's very measured," she said. "Everybody always loves him. Defense counsel always loves him. Judges always love him. Clients always love him. He's just so likable."

--Shane Nelson

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