

Business Experts

Area law firm focuses on a matter dear to owner's heart

Business Experts is part of an ongoing Leader series looking into what drives local businesses

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Leona Filis, owner of Filis Law Firm in Houston, has made it her mission to lend legal and life assistance to the families of special needs children. The Filis Law Firm handles special needs trusts and estate planning for families of children with special needs.

After passing the bar in 2002, Filis (the daughter of multiple entrepreneurs) created the firm as a general civil firm for wills and people in the community. Subsequently, she had transferred to oil and gas law, but in 2010, one doctor's visit brought about a shift describable only by those who experience it.

"My family got a diagnosis confirming my son is on the autism spectrum, so a lot of things changed for us," she



Contributed photo

Leona Filis

said.

Following some reflection and conversations with families of children with diagnoses such as autism and others, Filis decided to dive back into civil law with a renewed focus

on assisting such families.

Part of Filis' work in such cases involves intricacies such as tailoring a will to make sure the child who will need support from their parents due to a diagnosis will receive it for the rest of their life. A particularly prevalent issue she says can complicate situations for families of special needs children (and thus was a motivation for her to re-enter civil law) is the divorce rate she says sometimes comes as a result of the extra stress and time required following diagnosis, which could affect the care a child receives.

"A lot of parents are overwhelmed with the diagnosis at first for a few months, and in the meantime you're trying to get the proper therapy in place, and talk with the school to make sure they treat your child right," she said.

The heart and soul of Filis' mission is to provide stability for the entire family beyond the point of diagnosis and regardless of what stage the family is in when they approach her.

"It starts with getting them on the Medicaid program list, then talking when kids reach school age to help them with education things," she said. "It's talking to them in a way that's not overwhelming and is pertinent and important to that parent at that time in that stage of life for their child."

Filis Law Firm is located off Highway 290 at 5600 NW Central Dr., Suite 263. Readers can call 832-409-2889 for an appointment, mention the ad and get the consult at half price.

For more information on the firm, visit www.filislaw.com and www.houstonsspecialneedsattorneys.com