

## Family Law

**We all know families can be complicated. They come together and sometimes they come apart and reemerge in a new form. When it comes to family law, for Carrington Coleman, the law itself is just the starting point.**

Family lawyers find themselves deep in the dynamics of their client's relationships, whether it's playing a role in an upcoming marriage by drafting a premarital agreement or working through disagreements and conflicts that may arise later in the marriage. No matter a client's particular situation, everyone has their own individual goals, uncertainties, anxieties, and sometimes inaccurate information about their family law matter. When they come to Carrington Coleman for help, our first job is to not only listen to them—but to hear them.

### **We hear you**

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With over a half century of combined experience, our team has seen almost everything in family law, but we also know that no two cases are alike. Our clients' lives and families may be on uncertain ground for a host of reasons. By listening carefully to what they say and what's between the lines, we can often calm and reassure them that there is a path forward. Working together with them, we can formulate the next steps in their case. In addition to understanding their goals, we also recognize that those goals may evolve during their case, and we are ready to pivot with them.

### **Correcting misinformation**

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Family law is an area where it has always been easy for people to get second-hand information from friends or family about what happened in their case or their neighbor's case. The internet has magnified the problem a thousand fold, with clients often more confused than ever by what they hear and read. Our full knowledge of the law regarding these issues allows us to dispel the myths of family law so that clients can make informed decisions based on accurate information.

### **Full service family law**

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Family law is never about just one thing. Issues can be complex, for example, when there is a considerable marital estate, such as when divorcing couples include entrepreneurs or CEOs and issues of intellectual property, extensive real estate holdings, or closely held businesses are involved. Unlike firms who practice only family law, Carrington Coleman has the resources within the firm's other practice areas to address those issues, working side by side with our family law attorneys as a true team to provide full service family law representation.

## Child focused approach

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While Texas has guidelines for child support and possession (parenting time) with children that are reference point for the courts, parents can reach their own agreements on these issues, and others, affecting their children. These agreements will be approved by the court as long as they are in the best interest of the children. The Carrington Coleman family law team can craft language to accurately set forth the particular details of each agreement.

## Evolving with the times

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Lawyers and judges **must** keep up with the rapidly changing nature of today's families. These are just a few of the changes we help clients navigate every day:

- **The broadening definition of family:** What defines a family isn't as simplistic as it once was. Our lawyers embrace all types of families and relationships, including informal (common law) marriages, same-sex marriages and parenting, and others—all protected and equal under the law. As a fully inclusive firm ourselves, we welcome, value, and respect these clients.
- **An expanding view of child custody and visitation:** Although not yet the letter of the law, Texas has incrementally expanded the standard parenting time schedule closer to each parent having 50-50 time with the children. The decision, like all those involving children, is always based on what is in the children's best interest.
- **Parenting in the digital world:** As we all know, technology has changed our world, shrinking and accelerating it. The same is true for our children. Parents today face issues that didn't exist a generation ago: virtual visitation with online meeting apps, decisions about the age a child may have his own smart phone or other device, limits on screen time, what information will be shared about the child online. These are just a few examples; as the technology changes, so will the issues parents face in deciding what is in the best interest of their children, and we will be ready to advise on them.

## Areas of Focus

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### Divorce

No two divorces are alike. People bring to the process their own personal story and experiences. We work with them to develop an approach to address the legal issues they will face -- all within the context of a very emotional time in their lives.

### Custody Issues

We recognize that children are the highest priority for our clients. We work with them to address their children's needs within the new landscape of co-parenting both during and after divorce.

### **Complex Property Issues**

Texas marital property law characterizes property as either community property – the property of both spouses or as separate property — or the property of one spouse. While these concepts may seem simple at first glance, they can in fact often be more complex in real life. The attorneys here are well versed in the large body of law including the Texas Constitution, Texas Family Code, and case law that determine into which category — community or separate — property would belong.

### **Pre- and Post-marital Agreements**

Premarital agreements are designed to anticipate potential future property conflicts and address them up front, preventing resentments and misunderstandings later in the marriage. Post-marital agreements between already married couples resolve questions about property ownership before or after a conflict has arisen that may be disruptive to the marital relationship. These agreements are tailor made to the parties' particular circumstances and concerns.

### **When it Comes to Court**

Carrington Coleman's family law attorneys are experienced courtroom advocates. Of course, litigation is always the last resort, but when issues cannot be resolved any other way, we are fully prepared to present our client's case aggressively, skillfully, and persuasively.

### **Primary Contacts**

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