

# Don Schiller Retires

## *From The Frontline Of Divorce Practice*



Donald C. Schiller, co-founder of Schiller DuCanto & Fleck LLP, retired from “active practice” effective January of this year. After nearly 60 years of legal practice and 42 years with his internationally respected family law firm he co-founded in 1981, Schiller is stepping back from his heavy workload and is transitioning to be Counsel and Chair Emeritus of the firm. He will continue to provide consulting and assist with the development of strategies on behalf of firm clients. “I look forward to working with our associates and young partners to fashion creative solutions for the complex cases and issues we face in our practice,” said Schiller.

Schiller is widely regarded within the legal community and among those with substantial wealth for his impressive track record representing clients from the business, professional, entertainment, and sports communities, in complex and often times contentious divorces. Super Lawyers Magazine identified Schiller as a “gentleman in a volatile and acrimonious specialty of divorce law.” Illinois Super Lawyers Magazine also named Schiller “The Don of Divorce” and featured him on the cover of the publication upon the launch of its annual “Super Lawyers” and “Rising Stars” lists. While Schiller prides himself and the firm for maintaining a high level of discretion and confidentiality when it comes to the clients he represents, nevertheless there have been instances where he has handled cases with a high degree of public interest and media coverage has revealed some of Schiller’s client’s identities. From media publications, examples of notable people entrusting Schiller with their divorce cases include Juanita Jordan, Chicago Bears Hall of Fame linebacker Brian Urlacher, Chicago Bears Hall of Fame running back Gale Sayers, the former wife of the CEO of the Boeing Co., and in Nevada Elaine Wynn in her divorce from Steve Wynn.

“While it certainly will be difficult taking a step back from directly handling our usual challenging cases, I look forward to becoming more available to our lawyers not only for case strategies and solutions for complex legal issues, but to instill in our lawyers the importance of maintaining the firm’s culture of professionalism, civility, and the highest standards of ethics as it continues to grow,” said Schiller.

Coincidentally, recent examples of Schiller’s strong commitment to the firm’s culture are Schiller receiving two awards at the end of 2022 exemplifying his commitment to the highest standard of family law practice. In 2022, the National American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers honored Schiller with its “Professionalism Award” which recognizes individuals who “work to elevate the principled, respectful, civil and professionals practice of family law advocacy.” Schiller was also presented with the Decalogue Society of Lawyers “Award of Excellence.” The prestigious award is designated for “attorneys who bring increased dignity and honor to the legal profession by, among other things, rendering useful community service or participating in worthy movements for the public welfare.”

Not to be forgotten are Schiller’s substantial contributions made to the profession and the Bar. For example, Schiller has served as President of the ISBA, as well as serving as a member of the Board of Governors of the ABA. In addition, he made time to be the Co-Founder and first President of the Illinois Bar Association Mutual Insurance Company, which is one of the largest Illinois attorney malpractice insurers, as well as serving as the President of the American Bar Association Retirement Funds.

As the firm looks toward the future, Schiller has the utmost confidence in the firm’s upper management team, comprised of Managing Partner Meighan Harmon and Executive Committee members Senior Partner Karen Pinkert-Lieb, Senior Partner Tanya Stanish, and Executive Director David Schadler. A couple of Executive Committee members, both past and current, started with the firm as law clerks right out of law school.

Harmon commends Schiller’s progressive mentality of “understanding the importance of investing and nurturing the women of the firm as lawyers and leaders” at a time when legal practice was predominantly men.

“Being mentored by Don was the highlight of my legal career. He is a brilliant strategist with a unique ability to think out-of-the box. His commitment to excellence is unparalleled, and he expects the same from those who were lucky enough to learn from him,” said Pinkert-Lieb.

“Don modeled professionalism and mentoring before they became fashionable. He mentored us to value integrity, honesty, and love of the law over all else. I saw his fiercest opponents seek his counsel and trust him with sensitive matters. For someone of his caliber to mentor a young Latina from the first day she started at the firm speaks volumes about his humanity and character. He does what is right even when no one is watching,” said recent Executive Committee member and Senior Partner Anita Ventrelli.

Schadler said, “Forty-two years ago, Don Schiller had a vision. His vision was to create the best family law firm in the country by hiring the smartest and most dedicated people committed to practicing in this very difficult area of law with the objectives of providing a platinum level of client service while never compromising integrity and always keeping the client’s best interests in mind, every step of the way. To say that vision was realized would be one of the great understatements of our practice. Don remains diligent in protecting and nurturing the incredible law firm that he founded.”