

Daily Journal

www.dailyjournal.com

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2021

PERSPECTIVE

The Fixers

LA boutique Reuben Raucher & Blum often helps other attorneys out of jams.

By Shane Nelson

Special to the Daily Journal

Longtime litigator Timothy D. Reuben has a straightforward vision for his law firm.

"I would characterize us as people you come to when things are a mess," the Reuben Raucher & Blum founder said. "We are strategists, we are fixers, we are people who solve problems, and this happens over and over again. ... Very often we're replacing or advising or taking over for other counsel who have run into some very serious problems."

Reuben first hung his shingle in 1992, opening the Los Angeles firm with just a paralegal and a secretary. He said offering clients a nimble and more affordable model, without a tremendous amount of overhead, were early goals. But so was avoiding a very precisely defined practice area.

"We didn't want to fit a mold where we were only a certain type of law firm, such as we only do real estate litigation or we only do intellectual property litigation," Reuben explained. "We're experienced litigators, trial lawyers, courtroom people, and strategists. We look at litigation as its own art form, and you can apply our approach across the board in all kinds of circumstances as a question of judgment, understanding the people, the documents, the law."

Stephen L. Raucher joined the firm in 1994 and said he's always enjoyed the sophisticated and complicated nature of the civil litigation the attorneys take on. Raucher's practice has evolved over the past two decades, but he still often represents policyholders against insurance companies.

"You generally feel like you're representing the good guy against the bad guy," Raucher said of representing policyholders.



Justin L. Stewart / Special to the Daily Journal

From left: Stephen L. Raucher, Timothy D. Reuben and Stephanie I. Blum at Reuben Raucher & Blum in Los Angeles

An English major while an undergraduate at UCLA, Raucher said he thoroughly enjoys the intellectual challenge of parsing insurance policy language.

"It actually reminds me of when I would explicate poetry as an undergrad," he said. "The language is not as pretty, but the analysis is actually kind of similar."

Stephanie I. Blum joined the firm in 2005, bringing with her an extensive family law practice. At the time, a boutique focused on civil litigation and family law was an unusual combination, according to Blum.

"That wasn't done back then, but a lot of people have since followed in our footsteps," the certified family law specialist said. "I was looking around, and knowing all the people who practiced family law, I thought, 'I'm not working with them. I don't want to work with them.' ... It just made sense because Tim and Steve are both super smart, and although I do family law, there are many pieces that are the same as in civil litigation."

Blum and Reuben, who were dating in 2005, are now married and raising a daughter. Both said the law factors regularly into their home life — an arrangement they seem happy with.

"My wife works all the time," Reuben said with a laugh. "I'll be nodding off to sleep at night, and the day's over, and she'll nudge me and ask me a question about one of her cases. Then I'll wake up the next morning, and she's already working — sending out emails. And she'll ask me another question about a case. It's definitely not something we get away from. We obviously are very comfortable with the law all the time."

Reuben Raucher & Blum also handles appellate work, which Raucher often spearheads. This fall he's slated to make his first oral argument in a case before the California Supreme Court.

"I'm very excited," Raucher said. "The secret dream for every litigator is probably to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court, right? But the

California Supreme Court is the next best thing. It's a rare opportunity, and I'm looking forward to it."

Santa Monica litigator Andrew S. Pauly opposed Reuben Raucher & Blum last year in a case involving an aborted real estate transaction, and he described Reuben as a "very smart guy."

"Tim can be tough if, as and when he needs to be," Pauly said. "Unlike a lot of litigators, he has more than one switch, which means he can do more than just 'on.' He knows when to try to resolve things."

Pauly also said Reuben was extremely professional throughout the matter, which the two sides eventually settled.

"I think we're both 40-plus-year lawyers with very little patience for any of the shenanigans that can sometimes accompany litigation," Pauly said. "And it's always easier to have a sophisticated lawyer on the other side like Tim, who can see his angles and yours."

Los Angeles litigator Tom P. Lallas, who has known Reuben for 40 years and has co-counseled on cases with him, said he is an outstanding attorney.

"Tim is a relationship builder," Lallas said. "And he has the ability to avoid antagonizing adverse counsel and not be provoked by lawyers who are gratuitously belligerent. He's not an emotionally reactive guy. He's a strategist."

After nearly 30 years of handling a wide range of cases, Reuben said his now five-attorney boutique still won't say no to a challenge.

"We don't do things by the book," he said. "We don't do things in a regular and normal and ordinary way. What we do is we try to come to every dispute with a fresh look and not follow any kind of routine. ... And that has been incredibly rewarding. There's nothing more fun than grappling and struggling with an intellectually challenging problem." ■