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Mar. 15, 2023

### Peter M. Walzer

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#### Walzer Melcher & Yoda LLP



WOODLAND HILLS - Walzer is one of the deans of family law practice in Los Angeles. He has been a certified specialist for 35 years. And he served as the national president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers in 2017-18. He was the Southern California president of the group before that.

His firm handles the full range of family law issues, from custody and domestic violence to prenuptial agreements and cohabitation. Many of Walzer's cases include complex jurisdictional issues between states or countries, making him an expert in such matters.

For instance, he is representing a billionaire being sued by a former cohabitant in a Marvin-type dispute that includes international tax and jurisdictional issues.

Another client is an actress with a special-needs child. Issues include custody and caring for the child. Jurisdictional issues arose because the family moved to a different state as the case was pending.

Walzer's firm frequently represents doctors, lawyers and professionals getting divorced. One of his clients is a physician with a successful practice outside of California and properties in several states, all of which require valuation.

Another client is a professional sports figure in a post-judgment custody dispute with his ex, who is opposed to any vaccinations. Walzer's client, who lives in another state and sometimes must travel overseas, needed to have the child vaccinated for safety during visitation. Walzer eventually managed to work out an agreement with the mother.

"We've had several pro-vaxers versus anti-vaxxers [matters]. I think every family lawyer has," he said. "Why a pro-vaxer marries an anti-vaxer, god knows."

He has represented a number of celebrities over the years, including singer Frankie Valli, for whom he won an important California Supreme Court decision. In re: Marriage of Valli, 48 Cal. 4th 1396 (Cal., 2014).

Recently, he represented the spouse of a well-known TV star. He succeeded in winning spousal support after challenging a prenuptial agreement that included a support waiver.

Speaking generally, Walzer noted that the limitation of spousal support in prenups is in question now. "We don't know to what degree a prenup will be upheld in that area" going forward, he said.

Walzer said he generally prefers handling litigation concerning the valuation of property in a divorce. Those sorts of matters have been complicated in the last several years by the pandemic. "In my world, which involves evaluation of businesses, COVID decline, real or imagined or made up, is always an issue," he said.

The divorcing spouse who owns a business claims COVID-19 crippled the business and it won't recover soon, which would decrease its value. The "out-spouse" says the economy has recovered and government loans made up for temporary gaps in revenue.

"It's a fascinating dispute [that] generally resolves after mediation," he said.

But it also fits a common pattern. "For family lawyers, everybody's business declines at the time of divorce," he said. "It's just an amazing coincidence."

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