



## INFLUENTIAL LEADERS

### INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN SAN DIEGO

#### LAW

## Sarah T. Schaffer

Schaffer credits the U.S. Marine Corps with setting her on the path to establishing her own family law and mediation services firm in Carmel Valley.

Schaffer's service in the Marines ranges from five years of active duty as a logistics officer in Okinawa, Japan, and Quantico, Virginia, to her current role as a colonel in the Marine Corps Reserves as a JAG officer at Camp Pendleton.

While the officer in charge of the income tax assistance center at Miramar's Marine Corps Air Station, Schaffer encountered a number of family law cases, and as a reservist she met fellow Marine and family law attorney Daniel Herbert, who encouraged her to join the downtown San Diego law firm Higgs, Fletcher & Mack LLP.

"That's how I got into this field — I drilled with the partner that hired me," Schaffer said.

Schaffer is often called to active duty as a JAG officer, which she balances with managing the Law Offices of Sarah T. Schaffer and her work as a judge pro tem for the San Diego County Superior Court

during family law mandatory settlement conferences.

Her law firm, founded in 2011, is relatively small: She employs just one other full-time attorney, two contract attorneys, and seven support staffers. They handle all manner of family law cases, including divorce, property division, spousal support and child custody. Schaffer said her recent cases have included family-owned businesses working to appraise and divide assets, stocks and bonds.

Though she'd like to see the firm grow, perhaps even double in size, Schaffer said she prefers to keep offering a personalized approach to family law and mediation.

"I think our main mission is excellent client service with a team mentality," she said.

Schaffer is active in the San Diego County and North County bar associations and supports the programs of Kids' Turn San Diego, a nonprofit that helps children through family separations, and Casa Cornelia Law Center, which provides pro bono legal services to victims of human and civil rights violations.

— Jennifer McEntee



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