

# Zhia L. Shepardson, Esquire

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**OF COUNSEL ATTORNEY** *Rismiller Law Group, LLC* **June, 2005 to Present**

*Litigator and counselor in the following areas of practice: Family Law, Best Interest Attorney, Guardianship of Person and Property, Mediation, and Estate Planning.*

- Manage all aspects of a client's case/matter from beginning to end including completing all substantive and procedural work; analyzing facts; researching law; preparing communications on behalf of the client; developing case strategy; drafting motions; conducting investigations; preparing discovery requests and responses; conducting depositions; preparing, negotiating, enforcing and interpreting contracts; preparing pleadings and correspondence; participating in mediation and negotiations; conducting interviews; monitoring deadlines; managing office staff and client financial accounts.
- Mentor and train office staff to help their capabilities grow from professional assistants to paralegals.
- Mentor new attorneys, assisting them in learning about the litigation process, document drafting, managing professional relationships, managing deadlines and case strategy.
- Appointed by the Montgomery County Circuit Court in over one-hundred cases to thoroughly represent the needs of children in complex custody cases involving elements of domestic violence, substance abuse, high conflict, mental health issues, and even death of a child.
- Provide pro-bono and "low-bono" legal services to victims of abuse and children in need as well as first responder firefighters.
- Advise clients with estate and business planning, including assisting in evaluating which business entity is most suitable for their particular type and size of business.
- Prepare client Last Wills and Testaments, Trust Agreements, Powers of Attorney and Advance Medical Directives/Health Care Powers of Attorney.
- Serve as a mediator for child custody and access matters.

**ADJUNCT LAW PROFESSOR**      *Stevenson University*      **January, 2006 to Present**

*Instructor for courses such as Contracts, Analytical Thinking for the Legal Environment (LSAT), Introduction to Legal Studies, Problems in Litigation, and Legal Research & Writing.*

- Write entire courses and develop courses for in-class or online instruction including Contracts, Analytical Thinking for the Legal Environment (LSAT) and Introduction to Legal Studies.
- Lead lengthy lectures on various topics of law and analytical thinking.
- Mentor students through the law school admissions process and the job application process.

**ATTORNEY/LAW CLERK**      *Stein, Sperling, et. al.*      **2003 – 2005**

*Business and Tax Law Clerk (June, 2003 – November, 2004); Estate Planning Attorney (December, 2004 – June, 2005).*

- Prepared corporate filings and agreements, Last Wills and Testaments, Powers of Attorney, Trust Agreements, Medical Directives, and Contracts.
- Conducted client meetings/consultations.
- Drafted necessary client documents and agreements.
- Conducted legal research, prepared memorandums of law and developed case strategy.

**LAW CLERK**      *Comptroller of Maryland/Tax Compliance Division*      **Summer 2002**

*Tax compliance Law Clerk (Summer Internship)*

- Reviewed and organized subpoenaed documents and business documents.
- Researched legislative history.
- Conducted legal research, and assisted in developing case strategy.
- Assisted in investigations and depositions.

**PROFESSIONAL AWARDS**

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**Top 10 Family Attorneys in Maryland Under 40**, National Academy of Family Law Attorneys, 2014. Criteria includes “client reviews, peer reviews, length of time practicing family law, case outcomes, publications, education and training, teaching experience and legal awards.”

**Top 40 Litigators in Maryland** by The National Trial Lawyers, 2014:

“This recognition is extended exclusively to those trial lawyers practicing civil plaintiff and/or criminal defense law. Invitees must exemplify superior qualifications, trial results, and leadership as a young lawyer under the age of forty. Selection is based on a thorough multi-phase process which includes peer nominations combined with third-party research.”

**Top Young Lawyer in Maryland** by Super Lawyers (Baltimore Magazine and Washington, D.C.): 2010 – 2014. “Super Lawyers is a rating service of outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high-degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. The selection process includes independent research, peer nominations and peer evaluations.”

**Villa Julie College Elizabeth McWethy Award Recipient** (May, 2001). Award is “bestowed from time to time upon a student who has performed and achieved in an outstanding matter, developed creative potential, manifested genuine concern for others, and who has thus been a significant influence in the lives of others.”

#### **MEDIA APPEARANCES**

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- Featured Guest on Sirius XM’s *Jennifer Hammond Show: Reality of Real Estate Radio Show* (March, 2014)
- Featured Guest on Federal News Radio’s *Power of Attorney Radio Show* (May, 2013)
- Featured Guest on *Law School for the Public Television Show* (2006)
- Featured Tax and Legal Professional on Channel 9 News (2005)

#### **EDUCATION & CERTIFICATION**

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- **Stevenson University** (formerly Villa Julie College)  
*Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies with focus in Business Law: May, 2001*
- **University of Baltimore, School of Law**  
*Juris Doctorate with a concentration in Business Law: May, 2004*
- **Maryland Bar**  
*Admittance: December, 2004*
- **District of Columbia Bar**  
*Admittance: February, 2006*
- **Certification in Collaborative Law** (2009)
- **Certification in Mediation** (2004) and **Settlement Conference Facilitation** (2005)

- **Training in Child Representation:** November, 2005 & November, 2007

#### **ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER WORK**

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- **Preparing for Success Program** – designed to encourage young women to pursue higher education and gratifying careers.
- **Choose Respect Event** – program designed to bring awareness to young people about teen dating violence and prevention.
- **Wills for Heroes** - preparing basic Estate Planning Documents for first responder firefighters in Montgomery County on a pro bono basis.