

The Davis-Morris Law Firm is Your Disability Law Firm



Patricia Hegwood, Rebecca Gardner, Pat Evans, Angela Davis-Morris (seated), Diane Moore and Malida Rubie.

There are billboards and advertising materials all across the Pine Belt that read, The Davis-Morris Law Firm is Your Disability Law Firm, but what does that really mean? Let me see if I can explain.

Disability law cases are generally a long, arduous process. Through circumstances often beyond their control, a worker (often the primary bread-winner) finds themselves in a position of not being able to work. The insurance payments are quickly reaching the end and the emergency savings are long gone. It is often at this place that the phone rings at Davis-Morris Law Firm. This sets in motion events that hopefully will provide emotional and financial relief to those who are dealing with a disability.

Angela Davis-Morris, the woman behind the name says, "When clients call us, they are usually in a very tough spot. Things are hard on them both emotionally and financially and they are quickly running out of hope." And hope is one of the things Davis-Morris Law Firm tries to give their clients. "It is important to me that our clients know we believe in them, this gives them an uplift, hope!"

Clients who make their way to Davis-Morris Law Firm are looking for a way to reclaim their ability to provide, to know they can take care of

themselves. Some of these clients come in with more "issues" than just the disability. It is through well thought-out questioning that the team at Davis-Morris Law Firm begins to unravel how each intricate part of this persons life contributes to the current situation. Sometimes it is discovered the client has many more capabilities than they believe. Perhaps well-meaning parents who are not educated on certain disabilities have tried to shelter the child instead of fostering independence and ability.

Such was the case of one 19 year old young man who came to Angela. His parents, who, while they loved and cared for him, were not empowering this young man to believe in his own capabilities. They were supporting the disability mentality. This young man was about the age of Angela's son, Adam, and it really hit home with her. (Adam is currently completing his second year of community college and no doubt he is her "heart."). One day Angela just sat with the young man and talked with him as a mother might, asked him how he saw himself, what his goals were, where he saw himself down the road. His answers, both startling and disheartening, painted a picture of a boy without hope. This happens more often than she wants to think about.



Angela and Pat hard at work.

When I asked Angela what were some examples of cases represented in her firm, she was very clear there are no “cookie cutter cases.” Each one has completely different circumstances, issues involved, and is totally unique. One situation that sometimes manifests itself is the situation where the client becomes the medical diagnosis they have been given. If someone is told they have the back of an 80 year old, they begin to act and more appropriately move as though they were 80, when in reality they are no where close to the age or the disability.

For a disability case to be provable and winnable, it must meet certain requirements, one of which cannot be stressed enough. It is good medical documentation. “Having an injury, or inability to function doesn’t prove a case.” says Angela, “It needs to be backed up by good medical notes in their medical file, X-rays, MRI’s or other medical descriptions that prove limitations based on the diagnosis.”

Angela continually remarks that “we” this, that, etc., and when asked about that, since it is her name on the shingle so-to-speak, she responded that she has the best team of people working with her, and for her. From her very early days, she believes it was God’s will for her to follow this path and that He has put the right people with her at just the right time. From her humble beginnings working from her home, she has carefully chosen the team of individuals who are the backbone of her business today. Pat Evans is one such person. She joined the law firm in 1995 and has been Angela’s right-hand ever since. Through the years they have watched others come while building their careers and have watched them go as they continued on their own career paths. It was during these times that one of the Davis-Morris employees was killed in a car accident. “Our small team banded together. It was like losing a family member. The loss of an

employee is devastating and for us the only way to work through it was to work together, through it,” says Angela, “We would take turns working from her desk, all of us crammed in there, working in her office for a period of time, until we felt we could better handle it.”

The firm team consists of Pat Evans (office manager), Diane Moore (senior legal assistant), Rebecca Gardner (legal assistant), Owen Mayfield (attorney), Malida Ruble (intake specialist) and Patricia Hegwood (office assistant). Angela says, “They are all such good people, very smart, concerned, and helpful. They really are invaluable. I am very proud of them.” With a small staff, late hours and sometimes difficult cases to get through, the group is more



Angela with KISS in her office.

like family than co-workers. And having suffered the tragic loss of one employee, Angela feels even stronger the need to cherish all relationships and not to take "it all" so serious.

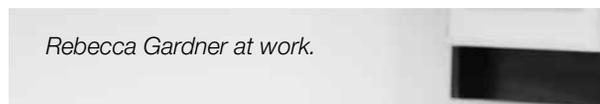
Building a successful law practice does not come without some sacrifices, and for Angela that came in the way of her weight. She says, "I was so busy worrying about others that I lost focus on myself, felt stress and found that eating made me feel better."

And so, many years and many pounds later she found herself in a place she didn't want to be. Overweight. When her husband of 15 years, Joe, revamped his eating and exercising habits to address a health concern, she paid attention, but she knew she needed her own "goal." In enters KISS. Yes, KISS, the classic rock band many of us rocked to in the 70's, 80's, and 90's. There was a KISS cruise sailing in October 2011 and Angela and Joe were going to be on it for their 15th wedding anniversary celebration.

Angela was determined on one cold January day, that she would be boarding the ship with less "baggage" of



Angela Davis- Morris at work in her office.



their wedding vows on this cruise because, as Angela put it, "We would marry each other all over again.")

This weight loss has given way to another one of Angela's favorite things, and that is blessing others. As she whittled away at her body, the clothes she used to wear were donated to many good causes, like Dress for Success, a volunteer-driven organization that depends on the support of the community to deliver programs and services to disadvantaged women.

It is hard to wrap up a story like Angela's: there are so many things left to write about, like how in 2011 she was named one

of the fifty leading attorneys in Mississippi by Leadership in Law or how she attributes her work ethic, sense of social responsibility and overall level head to her parents, Fred and Marie. "These two people crafted me into the core person I am today. I am fortunate, I know that. That is why I am able to do what I do. My parents are awesome." Or her sense of true compassion that is evidenced by the many organizations and charities she is a part of. So in closing, I asked Angela what she wanted to say and it was this: "We really are good at what we do, we really do care about our clients, and our clients know and feel it."

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