

Areas of Practice

Criminal Law

Attorney Hyde has been a bar advocate (Private Bar Public Defender) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts since 1993 under contract with the Middlesex Defense Attorneys, Inc. He has handled hundreds of appointed and private criminal cases in the state's District and Superior Courts. Practice in this area concentrates on crimes of violence, driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, protective order violations, larceny, motor vehicle violations, fraud, and myriad of other criminal matters. The time to seek legal counsel in a criminal case is the instant you discover you are involved in one. Nothing should be offered to investigating authorities that will be used later against your interests in court. You should politely decline to answer any questions for police until you have consulted your attorney. In a majority of criminal cases, the defendant provides most of the evidence against his or her own interests. Many people feel it is their obligation to tell everything they know about an incident under investigation, particularly if they are innocent. They often say that the police would think they were guilty if they did not cooperate. The truth is that it does not matter what the police think, your concern should be only what a judge or jury thinks about the facts. If they are given misleading facts because of your statements to police, they could find you guilty even though you are not.

The United States Constitution guarantees rights to all people in this country, whether citizens or visitors. There are three very basic rights with which everyone should be intimately familiar. The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom from illegal searches and seizures. The Fifth Amendment guarantees you the right to remain silent and to refrain from offering evidence against yourself in a criminal matter. The Sixth Amendment guarantees you the right to be represented by counsel during each and every critical stage of a criminal proceeding. You are not required to answer questions for a police officer, whether you believe you are involved in the matter being investigated or not. Your best approach is to say nothing until you consult with your attorney.

Civil Litigation

This law practice provides litigation services in the areas of landlord/tenant disputes, consumer protection, debt collection, and business litigation representing either the plaintiff or the defendant. The firm offers focused advocacy to achieve optimal results for the client. Most cases are taken on a contingency basis if we represent the plaintiff, whereby the client pays only for successful results based on damages actually collected. We represent small businesses in matters related to debt collection.

Debt Collection

Collecting debt today, with the many fair debt collection laws in place, is a complicated effort. This firm strives to provide consumers and businesses with a cost effective, rapid and efficient alternative to writing off debt. All avenues to collection are explored in every case to determine the potential for collection, prior to filing suit against the debtor. Minimizing the number of collection actions must be a small business' top priority. We offer collection counseling to help small business minimize the number of collections and to organize their credit services so as to optimize the potential for debt collection. Knowing what information to gather to assist in the collection effort is critical to rapid collection. We specialize in professional practice collections, including attorneys, doctors, dentists, accountants and similar professions.

Estate Planning

Planning for the future and the inevitable end of life is no longer a function for only the rich. Planning for the disposition of assets and the reduction of tax consequences of death is a necessity for anyone with even the smallest estate. We are

well versed on the requirements of probate and methods to avoid it, estate taxing and the methods to reduce it. Careful evaluation of the assets one owns and the need for future support of children and spouse can result in cost effective plans geared to maximize ones assets during life and thereafter. We use a combination of ownership strategies, wills, trusts, and insurance recommendations to maximize client estates. We analyze client needs, draft appropriate documents to support those needs and consult on management of the estate. Constant review of estate plans as laws change is an integral part of the process.

Family Law/Collaborative Law

Family law includes adoption, child custody, divorce, guardianship, support of children and spouses, paternity, and child visitation matters. This is one of the most delicate areas of the law dealing directly with most sensitive family issues. Care is taken by this firm to understand the necessity for representation, the objectives of the client and the relationship of those objectives to the law. We carefully consult with our clients in an effort to set appropriate expectations and to explain the effects of the law on their goals. We endeavor to accomplish a fair and reasonable resolution to our client's problem and desires. Going it alone in this area of the law can be devastating for years to come. Seek competent legal advice whenever family issues arise.

One of the ways attorney Hyde accomplishes fair and reasonable resolutions to family related matters is his use of Collaborative Law. The new and long overdue methodology in resolving problems is sweeping the country. It consists of the opponents in a dispute such as a divorce, custody issue, support or visitation situation, agreeing not to resort to court action. The parties and their counsel sign an agreement that restricts them from involving the court system until an agreement/resolution has been reached. If a party chooses to stop the collaborative process and resort to the judicial system, neither lawyer and none of the information gained during the collaborative process can be used in court unless gathered by new counsel within standard court practices and procedures. This minimizes the potential for misuse of the process and encourages participants to resolve their issues instead of a judge doing it for them. If you want or need a relationship of some sort with the opposing party after the issues are resolved, this is the process you want to employ.

Probate Law

Probate law consists of several distinct areas of law. First, probate of estates of deceased people is the best known area. This is the process by which the law attempts to insure the proper distribution of the deceased person's estate. Second, probate law deals with all areas of family law, such as paternity, divorce, child custody, guardianship, conservatorship, adoption, and name changes. Third, probate law involves the proper administration of trusts to insure the wishes of the trust's creator are properly carried out. Challenges to trusts and trustees actions are heard in the probate court. Probate law goes hand in hand with estate planning, to a great degree. The decisions made at the planning stages may well be reviewed by or challenged in the probate court. An extensive knowledge of probate law is required by a good estate planner.

Real Estate Law

When it comes to buying or selling real estate, you need someone who knows real estate law. We will review purchase and sale agreements or write one for your transaction. Since real estate is probably the largest purchase or sale you will make, it only makes sense to have professional advice during the transaction. Don't be disappointed after the transaction because you didn't seek knowledgeable legal counsel before the transaction.

Small Business Law

This firm concentrates on all areas of small business from entity type selection through incorporation, daily operations

and dissolution. We are consulted by our business clients in areas of liability, employee relations, human resource management and regulation, collections, contracts, leases, products liability, discrimination, vendor relations, civil litigation, and dissolution. Some services offered include legal audits, management training, in areas of associated law, and owner or stockholder relations and contracts. We consult on the need for inside counsel and work with inside counsel to represent the client in matters in litigation.