Family Matters

FIRM: Bauer Soule Garnholz Albin, St. Louis
www.stl-lawmatters.com

ATTORNEYS: Cynthia Albin, JD ’95; Ann E. Bauer, JD ’94; and Cynthia Garnholz, JD ’80; with Gary T. Soule and Susan Fox Jacobsen

AREA OF PRACTICE:
Family Law

YEAR FOUNDED: 2009

BRIEF BACKGROUND:
Alumnae Cynthia Albin and Ann Bauer have practiced primarily in the area of family law since graduating from Washington University and have practiced together since 2001. Both have been active in the local bar association and Missouri Bar. In October 2009, alumna Cynthia Garnholz joined them, along with Gary Soule, to form their current firm. Garnholz handles family law, small business, estate planning, and probate matters. She currently serves as an alderman for the City of Clayton and provisional judge for St. Louis County Municipal Court.

Q: Why did you choose to practice in a small firm?

A: Each of us values the “control over one’s destiny” that is possible in a small firm. We have direct control over most aspects of our practice, including expenses, the selection and compensation of support staff, and what clients and cases we will accept. Practicing as a small firm also gave us the opportunity to choose one another as law partners. We are so fortunate that we enjoy one another’s company, respect one another’s abilities, and support one another’s success.

Q: Do you feel that your firm size is a plus, a minus, or a nonfactor in your practice?

A: Since we spend a lot of time in the office and the work is intense, it is a definite plus to be in an environment that feels like “home.” Knowing each other and our support team well is a definite plus. We believe that all of us, attorneys and support team, know that each person is willing and able to help out when needed. That is a good feeling. The less positive aspect of a small firm is related to management since it takes a lot of time to run the business aspect. Having policies and procedures is important, and there are many nonbillable hours for each partner in a small firm. That can seem a burden at times when there are so few partners to share the load. On the other hand, we can get up every day and feel it is “ours” and we built it. That is a great feeling.

Q: What advantages, if any, have you found through practicing with your alumnae?

A: Alumnae Ann Bauer, JD ’94, and Cynthia Albin, JD ’95, overlapped in law school and shared that experience. Alumna Cynthia Garnholz, JD ’80, is a second-generation law school alumna. Her father, Edward W. Garnholz, graduated from Washington University School of Law in 1947. The fact that we all attended the same law school gives us a shared experience and common history that is both unique and fun. While we
At a Glance:
Cynthia Albin
- Volunteer lawyer, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri and Legal Advocates for Abused Women
- Board member, National Council of Jewish Women
- Guardian ad litem, St. Louis County Family Court
- Member, numerous professional associations

Ann E. Bauer
- President, Advisory Board for Woman’s Place and volunteer lawyer, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri
- Member, St. Louis County Family Court Task Force and Missouri Bar Family Law Section Task Force on Parenting Coordination, as well as past chair, Family Law Section
- Guardian ad litem, St. Louis County Family Court
- Member, numerous professional associations

Cynthia Garnholz
- Provisional judge, St. Louis County Municipal Court
- Alderman, City of Clayton
- Guardian ad litem, St. Louis County and City of St. Louis Family Courts
- Member, numerous professional associations

joke with one another that none of us would be accepted to the law school now due to its high standards for acceptance, we do value and are proud of the fact that each of us was accepted to and completed our law school education at a school that has for many years provided a legal education that is among the best in the nation. And our stock value keeps going up as the standards for acceptance rise at our alma mater!

Q: Why did you choose your particular area of practice?

A: For all of us, family law was an interest, and family work tends to come to small firm practitioners even if they are not trying to focus on family law. Family law offers the opportunity to work closely with people, and to help them at a very difficult time of life. For the three of us, that is rewarding. What people outside of family law do not always realize is the range of issues we deal with, and the multiple areas of the law that are part of family law. It may be numbers one day and emotional custody issues the other. It is an intellectually challenging area of the law.

Q: What advice would you have for someone interested in pursuing this area of law?

A: We would encourage those interested in pursuing a career in family law to look for a mentor, whether through a formal mentoring program or association with an experienced practitioner. Since practicing family law can be very stressful for lawyers, especially those learning that area of the law, it is also necessary for practitioners to develop ways in which to “throw off” the stress, whether through exercise, hobbies, or other relaxation methods. Ann Bauer is a runner, Cynthia Garnholz finds time for step aerobics and yoga, and Cynthia Albin enjoys exercising and spending time with her husband, Seth Albin, JD ’97, and two young children. We find this area of the law to be fascinating and rewarding, and encourage those who are interested in it to explore it as a primary field in which to practice and find career satisfaction.

Q: What has been the most rewarding aspect of your practice or a case you have handled?

A: We always want to do a good job for our clients. We often have to tell them the bad news of what they can expect versus what they want. We know that the results, whether in settlement or handed down by a judge after trial, are not always going to make our clients happy and that many will be in a very difficult financial circumstance going forward. It is rewarding when clients send pictures of their children at Christmas. It also is rewarding when clients tell us that they appreciate that we were honest with them about what to expect. We are happy when former clients return to us when they need to instead of seeking out a different attorney. Referrals from former clients are the best!

“The fact that we all attended the same law school gives us a shared experience and common history.”

"The fact that we all attended the same law school gives us a shared experience and common history.”