

Stephanie P. Ottenwess

Managing Partner • Ottenwess Law • Southfield
Wayne State University Law School, 1994

In addition to juggling a healthcare practice and managing her law firm, Stephanie P. Ottenwess is active in the American Health Lawyers Association, the Healthcare Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan, the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association and the Oakland County Bar Association.

The practice of law:

I can honestly say that I love the practice of law. I feel that I have been so fortunate to have found a career that blends my interest in medicine and science with my (apparently natural born) desire to advocate. And after 28 years of practice, I find that I am still learning every day and continue to be challenged in the legal work that I do and in managing the day to day business of the firm. Personally, practicing law allowed me to meet my husband and gave me the flexibility to raise three amazing kids. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Growing up:

Without question, I owe my work ethic and drive to succeed to both my mom and dad. They provided me and my siblings a plentiful life but taught us that there were no shortcuts and nothing would be handed to us. Only hard work, determination and honesty would allow us to achieve our goals and to achieve happiness in life.

Accomplishments and challenges:

My biggest professional challenge was the pandemic. As managing partner of the firm, I was in charge of pivoting the office to remote work and figuring out on a daily basis how to keep everyone engaged, motivated and mentally healthy. It was especially challenging given the fact that the majority of the firm's work is medical malpractice defense and not only were the courts shut down but all travel, depositions and even meetings with health care providers came to a screeching halt. I worked more during the quarantine than any time in my career. Thankfully, I had my husband and law partner by my side, helping to guide me and being my biggest cheerleader. My biggest professional accomplishment was successfully learning an entirely new area of law (health law) at 40 years old and after 16 years of practicing litigation. I essentially started over and built a new practice from scratch. I had no idea at the time how fulfilled I would become practicing health law. It was the smartest and bravest thing professionally that I have ever done.

Advice:

Work hard and do not take any opportunity you have been given for granted.



You didn't know:

In undergrad, I could not decide whether I wanted to go to medical school or law school so I took both the MCAT and the LSAT. Also, I make chocolate chip cookies that are so good, I'm asked to bring them to every event. My husband thinks I should start a side cookie baking business.

In one word:

Strong.