

GROWING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

A LAW FIRM WITH A PEOPLE-DRIVEN CULTURE

JOSEPH GREENWALD & LAAKE, PA

MANY MARYLAND ATTORNEYS have to choose between working at a small firm with limited practice areas or a large firm with an impersonal feel. Joseph, Greenwald & Laake, PA (JGL) is unique among firms in Maryland in that it specializes in a broad spectrum of practice areas but is not overwhelmingly large. This allows JGL to be nimble while still having the same level of resources and expertise as much larger firms. JGL also takes measures to foster an inclusive and diverse environment while providing its attorneys with the keys they need to thrive. As JGL looks toward the future, it aims to uphold its commitment to justice, advocacy, and collegiality.



◀ Matthew Bryant, Partner



Drew LaFramboise,
Senior Counsel

Veronica Nannis, Partner

Photo courtesy of Mitro Hood Photography

Fred Joseph, Andrew Greenwald, and Walter Laake founded JGL over 50 years ago. Paul Riekhof, a principal in JGL's Estates and Trusts Group, is the firm's managing director. Initially, JGL handled criminal defense, civil rights, medical malpractice, and personal injury cases. It quickly expanded to include family law and general civil litigation practices. JGL has grown exponentially over the years to become the largest firm in Prince George's

Veronica Nannis joined the firm as a law clerk and now is a partner and the Chair of the Civil Litigation Department. Nannis represents whistleblowers in False Claim Act cases nationwide. She predominantly focuses on healthcare cases, but JGL handles all manner of fraud cases in this area, and this practice continues to develop and grow steadily. Nannis also proudly serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Ayuda, a non-profit organization that provides legal, social, and language access services to low-income immigrants.

JGL attorneys testify in Annapolis on bills that would increase access to justice and protect plaintiffs. They are also frequently asked to comment on prospective legislation that could affect plaintiffs.

County. Currently, it boasts over 15 areas of practice, including labor and employment, trusts and estates, family law, and whistleblower law.

While the firm has grown over time, it has done so strategically and intentionally to meet its clients' needs and best support its practices. For example, over 10 years ago, it expanded to add a second office in Rockville, just a few blocks from the Circuit Court for Montgomery County. JGL opened its Rockville office to serve its Montgomery County clients, particularly in family law and trusts and estates. That move increased the demand for JGL's services and led them to merge with smaller family law firms. They continue to intentionally expand so that their practice areas complement each other and are natural sources of internal referrals.

In terms of the work environment, JGL puts people first. The firm is continuously seeking ways to achieve the right balance between high productivity and excellence and making sure the firm is an enjoyable, welcoming, and inclusive workplace where employees find great value in the work they do. JGL prides itself on having a culture that is driven by and revolves around its people and places a premium on being a place where its employees can learn and develop. To that end, the office is an "open door," collaborative environment. JGL also promotes mentorship but, at the same time, empowers attorneys and staff to chart their own path and have autonomy over their work.

The MSBA recently spoke with three JGL attorneys about what drew them to the firm and what they anticipate for JGL in the future.

In the future, Nannis thinks JGL will continue to grow in a thoughtful way, be flexible so that it is open to new practice areas, new hires, and new ideas, and continue to advocate for its clients.

According to Nannis, JGL will also continue to encourage its junior attorneys to grow and develop their own practices. Moreover, the firm is adapting to new circumstances, and it is becoming more sensitive to a changing workforce and culture. Nannis noted that JGL has shone a light on employee wellness through a new committee chaired by partner Lindsay Parvis and has dedicated itself to continuing diversity and inclusion evaluation and training.

Nannis stated that the firm hopes to continue its legal advocacy not only in court but also in the legislature. JGL attorneys testify in Annapolis on bills that would increase access to justice and protect plaintiffs. They are also frequently asked to comment on prospective legislation that could affect plaintiffs. Fred Joseph, Andrew Greenwald, and Walter Laake all believed in this dual approach to advocacy, inside and outside the courtroom. The firm continues that legacy today with Tim Maloney, Jay Holland, and Erika Jacobsen White, among many others, regularly advocating for balanced laws to protect plaintiffs' rights and access to justice in general.

Matthew Bryant joined the firm as an associate in September 2010 and was promoted to partner in February 2022. His practice focuses on civil trial work and appellate litigation. He also handles civil rights cases, which usually focus on excessive force cases or lawsuits against school systems arising from injuries to children.

Bryant chose JGL for three reasons. First, he was impressed by the group of attorneys that interviewed

him. They struck him as smart, down-to-earth people who were deeply motivated by obtaining justice for their clients. Second, he was aware of the firm's recent success in a high-profile civil rights case. Third, he saw the firm as a place where he could gain incredible experience while working with some of the best attorneys in Maryland. To Bryant, his colleagues are the best part of JGL, and he considers himself lucky to be a partner at the firm.

Drew LaFramboise joined JGL in November 2021. His role as Senior Counsel in the Civil Litigation Department allows him to take the lead in high-profile, complex civil cases, principally in D.C. and Maryland state and federal courts. His practice is wide-ranging: he currently handles personal injury, products liability, civil rights, consumer protection, class action, sexual assault and abuse, and fraud/qui tam cases.

LaFramboise chose JGL because of its well-earned reputation for excellence in the

greater D.C. area. Beyond the high quality of the firm's work, upon meeting many of JGL's senior attorneys, it became clear to LaFramboise that the firm was dedicated to some key tenets that he values and thinks are critical to success: inclusivity, diversity, and investment in professional development. In addition, he was impressed that JGL attorneys work across a wide range of practice areas while still maintaining an intimate and collaborative work environment.

LaFramboise describes the firm's future as bright and notes that JGL will make every effort to continue to grow in the right direction. That means pursuing cases and providing legal services that positively impact the community, having a client-centric approach, putting the clients' needs first, and hiring attorneys and legal professionals dedicated to the firm, its work, and its clients. It also means providing services to our community beyond just legal work, such as charity and community service.

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