

BASCH & KEEGAN

PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

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CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

The Evolution of Basch & Keegan: Celebrating 35 Years

As we enter the New Year of 2023, Basch & Keegan has been reflecting on the last 35 years with an eye toward the future. The attorneys in the firm are proud of what they have accomplished and are excited about the future. The partners are honored that the firm's success has enabled them to serve the community for 35 years and help thousands of clients and their families.

The Partnership of Eli B. Basch & Maureen A. Keegan

The legacy of Basch & Keegan begins in December of 1987 when Eli B. Basch began his own practice. Eli spent some of his first years as an attorney as a judicial law clerk for NY Supreme Court Justice, Aaron E. Klein. When his service concluded, he entered private practice with an experienced trial attorney, William P. Curran, and fell in love with personal injury law. Eli began his own practice shortly thereafter at 276 Fair Street in Kingston, NY. He worked in that office for two years with three support staff,

including Kathy Murphy and Lori Wojciehowski who are still with Basch & Keegan today.

Eli was a natural. His practice thrived. He obtained many substantial verdicts and settlements, and he became famous in Ulster County for his advertisements on the back of the phonebook. After two short years, Eli needed to bring on another attorney, which is how Maureen Keegan entered the fold.

Eli had been introduced to Maureen Keegan while she worked as an attorney for the Corporation Counsel's Office at the City of Kingston. Maureen had completed Pharmacy College before attending law school, and she handled medical malpractice cases for a renowned medical malpractice defense firm before moving upstate. Eli had become aware of Maureen's many talents and her vast experience. He referred Maureen medical malpractice cases beginning in 1988 while she was living in Albany with her husband and two children, and working for another firm.

In 1989, Eli moved the law practice from his small second-floor office on Fair Street to 307 Clinton Avenue, where the Basch & Keegan offices are still located today. In October 1991, Maureen accepted a position as a part-time associate with Eli while she commuted from her home in Albany for close to 9 years before relocating her family to Kingston.

"The commute was an experience," Maureen recalls. "At first, I only worked on helping Eli with medical malpractice cases at the 276 Fair Street office that had an enormous staircase. I could never figure out how the injured clients got up and down those stairs, but they did! Mostly the commute was fine, but occasionally, I spent time getting to know speed limits, icy roads and New York State Troopers. There was also the benefit of quiet time and a break from the small children's needs."

Maureen earned partner in 1996. Few women practice plaintiff personal injury law, and even fewer women are founders of a successful law firm. Maureen Keegan managed to raise two children and practice law successfully because both her husband, Dave, and Eli, her law partner were always very supportive.

During her years of practice, Maureen has been a stalwart for young female attorneys and professionals alike. She has obtained many profound settlements and verdicts, many in the practice area of medical malpractice.

Together, Eli Basch & Maureen Keegan formed a widely successful law firm, and in 1998 the name Basch & Keegan, LLP was officially registered.

Basch & Keegan is Built

As business expanded, so did the firm. Because of their dedication to clients, Eli and Maureen enjoyed much success. When you focus on the client, and not yourself, success follows according to Eli. The firm's reputation for helping clients succeed created a need for more assistance.

“We needed the help and were looking for someone with great writing skills,” Eli explains.

Derek J. Spada, a Saugerties native, was the perfect fit. Derek had attended Cordozo Law School in New York City. At graduation, Derek was awarded the **Jacob Burns Medal** for *Best Brief*, which is given to the best writer of the Moot Court Honor Society. Derek started as an associate with the firm in the year 2002, and he immediately assumed a major roll by taking on the firm's complex legal writing, including all motions and appeals. Derek's legal writing skills have given Basch & Keegan a huge advantage over its adversaries.

In addition to writing, Derek is an accomplished trial lawyer and continues to propel the firm forward.

Derek's association with the firm only helped propel Basch & Keegan into the 21st Century with a strong business model and continued growth on the horizon. The three attorneys needed more help. This is how the firm's fourth attorney, John A. DeGasperis, joined the ranks.

John had graduated from Albany Law School in 2009. “The economy was in the tank, and law graduates were not in high demand.” After going door to door for months, John had landed an associate position with a Kingston-based solo practitioner. John had earned a strong reputation in the community during his first year in practice, which caught Maureen’s attention. The two lawyers, John and Maureen, bumped into one another at a local pub one evening and Maureen inquired whether John would be interested in joining the practice.

John was hired in 2011. Maureen describes John as having an eye towards the business side of things. One of the first things that John accomplished after being hired was the digitization of the law office. Basch & Keegan is basically paperless now, which makes working cases easier and more efficient. Because of the technological developments implemented by John years earlier, the firm quickly adapted when the COVID-19 pandemic required remote work.

John has become an integral part of the firm’s law practice, as well as its future. He is an accomplished trial lawyer with many favorable verdicts, and he continues to contribute to the firm’s business management.

Four Equal Partners

The attorneys at Basch & Keegan have always felt a sense of duty and civic responsibility, which explains the firm’s strong philanthropic history. In 2018, Maureen and Eli took an extraordinary step toward the firm’s legacy planning. In that year, they named Derek and John equal partners. This decision to elevate Derek and John to partnership status ensures the firm was positioned to continue providing quality legal services to injured people throughout the Hudson Valley well into the future.

Attorneys share their experiences as a partner:

“Being partners, you are trusting and holding each other responsible and accountable. We all have sophisticated legal expertise. Each partner is a good fit, and each partner has their niche. Our skills complement each other, and we all take pride in helping people. We all focus on the people we help, and that is why we work so well

together. We have the same end goal, and that is helping the clients.” – *Eli B. Basch*

“To be a law partner is very similar to having a spouse. Trust and respect are required. You can get into disagreements and still resolve the issues calmly. Having lunch together allows the lawyers a chance to learn from each other, discuss new cases, old problems and give insights that help breed success.”

- *Maureen A. Keegan*

“The firm has changed so much over the years. We are the same busy practice that I started with 20 years ago, but we have evolved a lot. I think if we didn’t change, we would have fallen behind. Once you get to the top, it’s hard to not plateau. Getting to the top is hard but staying there is equally as challenging. I’ve also learned over my years at Basch & Keegan that a strong support staff can make or break you.”

- *Derek J. Spada*

“I love being a part of such an accomplished legacy and one that is so philanthropic. Very few people have bad things to say about our firm and that makes me proud. I am blessed to have such great mentors who have treated me well. They have a lot of experience and wisdom. It’s an exciting time. Derek and I are now stepping up to the plate to take the firm onto its next steps. We plan to work together for many, many more years to come.”

- *John A. DeGasperis*

Support Staff

According to Eli, the hardest part about running a firm is keeping the staff happy. He views the staff as more important than himself, and he tries to be there for them and their families, as well as his clients. Two of the firm’s legal secretaries have been with Eli from the beginning.

“I give my staff the time off they need and deserve,” he states. “I remember there was only one time I asked Maureen to work on a Saturday when she was an associate while living in Albany. I was helping her husband, Dave, surprise Maureen for a birthday party. She came into work dressed down with her hair pulled back. When she got home, she had absolutely no idea that she was walking into a big party. Dave had the cars parked outside and out of view, and the guests inside. She was so surprised!”

Memories Through the Years

35 years is a long time, and a lot of monumental changes and memories are created through the years.

“It’s like a favorite jacket or favorite slippers – the best time are when they are new and after years of wearing and having that comfort,” Eli explains. “Each stage has its great moments.”

One of the most influential changes with the firm was using the phonebook for advertising.

“When we first put our picture ad in the phone book, some people in the local bar association were not happy,” Maureen recalls. “It was somewhat frowned upon. However, everyone saw how well it worked and knew our phones were ringing off the hook. We couldn’t keep up with the business! Everyone quickly followed suit.”

Another monumental change for Basch & Keegan was the acquisition of 303 Clinton Avenue, the neighboring building to the original office. Derek and John purchased and renovated the building in 2020, just two years after being partners with the firm.

“We were expanding and getting too cramped in the original building,” Derek describes. “It was time to grow, and the building renovations came out great. I couldn’t be happier with the offices.”

John goes on to say, “Expanding the Basch & Keegan office shows that Derek and I are here to stay and are putting our roots down. We are investing into the future of the firm. The fact that we did this after such a short time being partners also speaks volume to our dedication.”

Basch & Keegan, Here to Stay

Basch & Keegan, LLP is stable. The firm is well respected by the community, including other lawyers, past clients, and the judiciary. Our foundation was poured in the Hudson Valley, and our future will be built there. Eli B. Basch & Maureen A. Keegan founded a successful firm. Derek J. Spada and John A. DeGasperis will expand and grow the brand. The next 35 years will be filled with success, purpose, and dedication to clients, community, and principals of justice.

We are here to help, and we are here to stay.

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