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LISA SAUL

Forde & O'Meara LLP

Lisa J. Saul

PARTNER WITH FORDE & O'MEARA LLP



» partner spotlight

By **Jennifer Mitchell**
Photos by **Sonya Martin**

Throwing “Working-Mom” Guilt Out the Window

According to Lisa J. Saul, there is no such thing as the perfect work/life balance, and that’s okay. Partner and chair of the Real Estate Group at Forde & O’Meara LLP, and mom to two boys (Jonah, 13, and Max, 11), Lisa has spent her whole career striving to find the right work/life balance. But she has come to accept that balance is more of a fluid goal that changes over time.

Though she grew up in the northern suburbs, Lisa wasn’t often home. She was an avid figure-skater and spent her summers traveling all over the country, competing with her precision drill team. She earned her undergraduate degree at Tulane University in New Orleans and attended law school at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., where she fell in love with political science and the energy of our nation’s capital.

After her second year of law school, she was a summer associate at Mayer Brown LLP in Chicago, and worked closely with a partner in the real estate group who focused on zoning work.

“I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to speak at a public hearing that summer and I instantly knew I wanted to work in real estate,” recalls Lisa. “Zoning work was like a puzzle and I loved putting the pieces together. The rest is history.”

After graduating from law school, Lisa came back to Chicago and spent seven years in the real estate group at Mayer Brown LLP before eventually making her way to Forde & O’Meara LLP. The boutique law firm specializes in real estate, commercial litigation, and government affairs. And Lisa is incredibly passionate about the work.

“I like to treat each client like they are my only client,” claims Lisa. “Buying or selling a home is a very stressful and emotional time in their lives and I take great pride in making the process as stress-free and enjoyable as possible, especially if the client is purchasing their first home or selling a long-time home. So it’s important to me that my clients know I am always accessible and that there is no question too small.”

Personal attention is what sets Forde & O’Meara LLP apart. The associates are always accessible and take a detail-oriented approach to every deal. Their goal is to conclude a transaction and hear the client say, “Wow! That was so much easier than I thought it would be.”



Lisa in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Being a working mother requires a lot of multi-tasking and efficient processes. Lisa notes that there is never enough time in the day to get everything done and she struggles with a sense of guilt when she isn't able to "shut off" at a certain time—something most working moms can relate to. The pressure to be the perfect mom and the perfect lawyer can be overwhelming, but Lisa notes that it's okay to let those two roles blend a bit.

"I think it's healthy for my kids see how much I love my job, and I hope that will lead them to one day work in an equally fulfilling profession," explains Lisa. "It's much easier to find balance and put in long hours when you enjoy what you're doing. My goal is to do the best I can and not feel guilty about the rest."

It also helps that her sons serve as her motivation to accomplish great things at work. She strives to model a good work ethic so as to teach her boys that on the days when you're feeling down or unmotivated, you still have to get up, go to school or work, and give it your best.

But after the school day and workday, it's time for fun. It doesn't matter what they're doing—as long as Lisa and her sons are together, they're having fun. This summer, they're looking forward to hopefully spending some time at Wrigley Field and fishing. (Max is an avid fisherman, so Lisa has enjoyed learning how to fish.) The more time they can all spend together, the better. And when life gets hectic and stressful, Lisa asks herself one simple question:

"Will this matter in five years?" says Lisa. "If the answer is no, I try to move on. The only constant in life is change. There will be good times and bad times. You just have to do your best to get through the bad times because things do get better."



On a Polar Bear Expedition in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada.

