



BETTER KNOW A NEIGHBOR

THIS LAWYER'S GOT GAME

HOW FORMER COLLEGE BASKETBALL PLAYER AMY STEWART
 CHANNIELED THAT FIGHT INTO A NEW FIRM

Interview by **LISA KRESL** / Photography by **DANNY FULGENCIO**

BLUFFVIEW RESIDENT AND LAWYER Amy Stewart started a women- and minority-owned law firm with partner Sarah Bradbury at One Arts Plaza in September 2017. Passionate about helping women and minorities, Stewart uses her experience as a former Division 1 college basketball player to do battle for clients. She is the author of a chapter in "Her Story: Lessons in Success From Lawyers Who Live It." Husband, Ed, works for the Big 12 Conference. Her 13-year-old daughter, Ava, attends Trinity Christian Academy.

Tell me about yourself.

I'm originally from North Carolina. I came to Texas in 2006,

"From the beginning, we had a tagline that we support women. Period."

when my husband got a job with the Big 12 Conference. We moved here with our daughter, Ava, who was 2 at the time. Fast forward until last September, when my partner Sarah Bradbury and I decided to start a law firm. We're exhausted, but we're having a good time.

How long have you lived in Preston Hollow?

We moved here last year in May. We live in Bluffview. It didn't look like Dallas. It looked very green. It's a quiet bedroom community. We got lost in the neighborhood and thought, "We've got to find a house over here."

How did you and your husband meet?

Before I went to law school, I played basketball at Wake Forest, and then I didn't really know what I was going to do with my life. I coached college basketball for a few years and then I worked for a company that was a consultant for the NCAA. I met Ed through work. He was working for the University of Missouri, and it's just one of those "met him through work"-type of deals. He snookered me, and then I moved to Columbia, Missouri. We are so grateful to be here in Dallas for his job with the Big 12 Conference.

What made you want to start your own firm?

We wanted to serve our community. We wanted to provide top-notch legal skills in commercial litigation, labor employment and product liability, but also help people, especially women. From the beginning, we had a tagline that we support women. Period.

Sports played a big role in your life, tell me about that.

If I hadn't gotten an athletic scholarship, I wouldn't have gone to college. I needed that scholarship to get out of Five Points, North Carolina and get a degree. It was survival. The skills

I learned as a student athlete — how to be a competitor, but doing it with grace, coming up with game plans, working with teams. We want to team up with our clients and help them get the best resolution that they can. There's no other career where being in trial gives you the same sense as being on the basketball, volleyball or tennis court.

How much gender discrimination do you face?

There is a part where you have to prove yourself. I'm not going to lie. I lead with the fact that I was a student athlete with clients because people perceive that female athletes work hard and are dedicated to team work.

What challenges have you overcome?

My father was African American and my mom is white, and I was born in the south in the '70s. Do I need to say anything else? Walking around with a mother that no one thought was your mother was awkward. But it made me stronger. It made me able to get along with people from different backgrounds.

What advice would you give your younger self?

Be patient.

What's your typical day?

On my best day, I get my work-out in. I get Ava ready for school, get Ed ready for work. I get to the office at 8 or 8:30. I run the legal business of the firm and handle business development. Depending on the night, Ava plays club volleyball. If it's my best day, I'm ending the night with my husband and we're having a glass of wine and getting ready for the next day.

What would surprise people about you?

We're passionate about supporting two women's groups in town. We support a group called Mothers Abandoned or Widowed. It's a non-profit that helps women that are trying to turn their lives around and help their kids. We sponsored a golf tournament this year for them. And then the other one that's very dear to my heart is helping the female veterans at a group called Honor Courage Commitment. I was at a conference and I heard very heart-

wrenching statistics about women when they come back from being in the military and trying to assimilate into civilian life. In March, we had an event where I invited women from all professional areas. There were more than 150 to 200 women there, and we created these vision boards. In the fall of 2019, we plan to create a mentorship program between the female veterans that attended and professional women.

What are your plans?

I've had an article published by the American Bar Association. I'm starting a series called "The Girlfriend's Guide to Negotiating."

How to help: Contact Mothers Abandoned or Widowed at mawcharities.com and Honor Courage Commitment at hccvet.org.

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