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Divorce and other family law issues are fraught with emotion, and it is easy to fall prey to **poor judgment during these difficult times.**

The last thing you need is to choose an inexperienced Stuart divorce attorney who makes critical mistakes in your case that lengthen the process, cause disputes and increase your legal costs. You need a lawyer who has compassion for your situation and is smart and aggressive during negotiations and court proceedings. The best way to achieve that result is to obtain the legal services of Stuart family lawyer Leanne L. Ohle.

Ways to get a divorce in Florida

There are several ways couples can get a divorce in Florida. Some ways are more favorable than others, depending on the couples' unique circumstances. The traditional way of getting a divorce is to call an attorney. We recommend each party have his or her own attorney, who will serve as a personal advocate. When you contact us, we will listen carefully to the facts of your case. Our attorney will work closely with you to file the necessary paperwork and advocate on your behalf in the division of property and resolution of child custody-related issues. Today, there are ways of filing a divorce that may be more convenient for some clients.

Florida residents now have the option of filing for a divorce online. This option is usually most convenient for people who have will an uncontested divorce. In an uncontested divorce, both parties have already agreed upon the terms of the dissolution of the marriage. Divorcing couples may come to an agreement on their own or in mediation. Online divorces are typically handled over the internet through a service.

It is also possible to handle the divorce process yourself in Florida. If you prefer the self-serve option, you will need to know the legalities, including which forms to use, where to file the documents, and what to do next. Similar to the online filing option, divorces with few complications are usually the best cases for the DIY approach to filing.

Florida divorce requirements

Divorce cases are handled in Florida's Family Court division. These courts can only grant divorces in cases over which the local state courts have jurisdiction. First, at least one partner is required to have resided in Florida for at least six months. Next, the divorce must be based on one of two grounds: 1) the marriage is "irretrievably broken" or 2) one of the parties has been declared mentally incapacitated by a judge for at least three years prior to the other party filing for a divorce.

Cases involving child support

Strict state guidelines are in place for child support amounts based on the incomes of the parents, and payments continue until the child reaches the age of 18. Child support also encompasses health insurance coverage and out-of-pocket medical expenses for the child.

Child support is an issue divorcing couples and single parents may face. During a divorce trial, the family court judge will typically work out the details of child custody and visitation in addition to calculating the amount of support the non-custodial parent will be required to contribute to the child's upbringing. People who have a child outside of marriage may also utilize the family court process to resolve matters of custody, visitation, and support. Parents should go to court to work out official custody and child support arrangements even if the parents are amicable and one of the parents has agreed outside of court to contribute financial support. There may come a time when the parents have a major disagreement, a parent's life circumstances change, or a parent may otherwise require proof of a legal child support order. Florida family court attorneys are available to help parents work through compensation, health insurance, tuition, and other matters related to the financial support and upbringing of children whose parents are not together.

Paying and receiving spousal support after a Florida divorce

Depending on certain factors within a marriage, a Florida family court will award alimony or spousal support in the event of a divorce. While there are many popular misconceptions about spousal support, courts consider several factors in determining whether to award spousal support and exactly how much the recipient should receive. Currently, Florida courts may order five types of alimony:

- **temporary**
- **bridge-the-gap**
- **rehabilitative**
- **durational**
- **permanent**

Temporary spousal support is available to spouses who need financial assistance during the divorce proceedings. Bridge-the-gap support helps spouses meet short-term needs while transitioning from being married to being single. For example, the lower-earning spouse may need support while waiting for the marital home to sell or while looking for full-time employment after the divorce is finalized. Rehabilitative support is the most common type of spousal support. The recipient spouse may use this type of support while attending school, receiving job training, or gaining work experience to develop skills that will allow the spouse to eventually earn enough income to support his or her household after the marriage. Courts usually award rehabilitative support and put a rehabilitative plan in place. Durational support is similar to rehabilitative support; however, the spouse only receives the support for a pre-determined amount of time. The court will not necessarily create a rehabilitative plan when awarding durational support. Permanent alimony is rare. Florida courts award permanent support to spouses who are unlikely to be able to support themselves in the future. This type of support is most often awarded in cases in which the lower-earning spouse is advanced in age, disabled, or caring for a child who has special needs.

Florida paternity cases

Paternity cases establish the identity of the legal father of a child to allow child support and parental time-sharing arrangements to be negotiated and legally put in place. Either the father or the mother of the child can initiate a paternity action. Paternity is typically proven with DNA testing.

Reasons for establishing paternity

There are several reasons a child's mother or father would seek to establish paternity through a paternity test. People often think of the need to determine or prove paternity arising when a man or woman is unsure of who fathered a child. Perhaps there was suspected infidelity at the time the child was conceived or the child's father may be denying paternity. In some cases, the child's father may have been previously

unaware of the child's conception and seeks to determine paternity after learning he could possibly be the father. A mother may request a paternity test to initiate the process of filing to receive child support. A child's father may take a paternity test to prove he is the father of a child if he plans to file an action to receive custody of the child or visitation rights. A man who is not the father of a child may take a paternity test to prove he does not owe child support.

A compassionate lawyer on your side

Divorce attorney Leanne L. Ohle is a dedicated advocate who approaches every case with compassion and commitment to professional excellence. While she deals with legal processes every day, she never forgets that her clients are often intimidated and uncomfortable with lawyers and courts. This is why she takes the time to answer your questions honestly, letting you know with straightforward language what you can expect during each stage of the legal process.