

## **Maria Caruso**

Maria Caruso grew up in Upstate New York and attended college at Syracuse University. After college graduation in 1986, she moved to Baltimore to attend law school at the University of Baltimore. Throughout law school, she clerked for various law firms, and government agencies gaining experience in a variety of areas of the law. In January of 1989, while finishing her last semester of law school, she began as a law clerk in the Felony Division of the Office of the Public Defender for Baltimore City. She graduated from the University of Baltimore Law School in May 1989, and was admitted to the bar by the Court of Appeals on December 18, 1989.

In May 1990, she transferred to the Office of the Public Defender for Harford County and began as an Assistant Public Defender in the District Court of Maryland. After gaining tremendous experience in the District Court of Maryland, she moved on to practicing in the Circuit Court of Harford County. Her experience in the Circuit Court involved handling many types of cases including serious felonies, such as drug and murder cases. In 1997, Maria received an award from the Office of the Public Defender for the Outstanding Assistant Public Defender for Harford County, recognizing her winning jury trial record. Maria had not lost a single jury trial and still maintains that record for all jury trials in which she was sole counsel. She maintained her District Court and Circuit Court trial practice with the Office of the Public Defender until May of 1999. At that time, Ms. Caruso resigned from the Office of the Public Defender to enter private practice.

While continuing to handle criminal and traffic matters, she has a large family law practice. Ms. Caruso handles all aspects of family law, including divorce, custody and visitation, child support, modification of custody and child support, and domestic violence protective orders and peace orders. She is very familiar with the process of custody and psychological evaluations and well prepares her client for the process should the case be heading in that direction. Ms. Caruso has also been a Best interest attorney where she represents the interest of children that find themselves in the middle of a custody battle. She understands the emotional and financial difficulties divorce can bring to one's life and she is compassionate yet assertive and knowledgeable in this area to handle even the most complex family law matters. She also handles guardianship cases of both minors and adults. Ms. Caruso practices in many jurisdictions including Harford, Baltimore, Howard, Anne Arundel and Cecil Counties and Baltimore City, and her private practice includes small business matters, Social Security Disability, MVA hearings, and small claims actions in the District Court of Maryland.

In addition to the practice of law, Ms. Caruso has been very involved in other law related activities. Throughout her legal career, Maria has been very involved in Bar Association activities at all levels, including the local Harford County Bar, the Maryland State Bar Association ("MSBA"), and the American Bar Association. In addition to serving on numerous local and State bar committees, she was a member of the Executive Committee for the Young Lawyer's Section of the MSBA, and held the position of Treasurer. She was also the Harford County representative to the Solo and Small Firm Committee of the MSBA. Maria has been

appointed to the Inquiry Committee of the Attorney Grievance Commission, which governs lawyers' conduct and determines appropriate punishment. She is also a member of the Maryland Criminal Defense Attorney's Association, and a Board of Trustee member for the Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers ("MICPEL"). Maria received an Award of Achievement from the American Bar Association at the its annual convention in 1997 for her work with the MSBA Young Lawyer's Section and in 1998 she had the honor to lecture at the American Bar Association's Young Lawyer's Division meeting in San Diego, California.

Maria lives in Harford County with her husband and their three children.