

New Orleans CITY BUSINESS

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KAREN SHIPMAN

2011
LEADERSHIP
in
LAW

Title: Kean Miller Hawthorne D'Armond McCowan and Jarman partner

Age: 39

Family: husband, Otis; daughters, Ruby, 3, Olive, 1

Education: bachelor's degree in anthropology, Emory University; juris doctor, Tulane University Law School

Maritime lawyer Karen Shipman, a partner at Kean Miller, expected to specialize in intellectual property at Tulane University Law School but reconsidered after taking a class called "The Law of the Sea" while enrolled in the university's summer program in Greece. The course was taught at a location next to the Aegean Sea.

"Most of my cases these days involve contract disputes and casualties in the oilfield offshore or onshore, including well blowouts, transfers of personnel, vessel collisions with pipelines or platforms, or just about anything you can imagine happening in one of our state's most important industries," Shipman said.

Several years ago, she won a \$10 million judgment for a large natural gas producer involving a well blowout after a lengthy trial and years of litigation.

"Every case brings new challenges and things to learn to adequately represent my clients, like how to jack up a drilling barge or how a petroleum engineer calculates reservoir damage," Shipman said.

After a brief stint as a lawyer in New York, the New Jersey native decided to return to the Crescent City, where she clerked for Judge Fredericka Wicker in the 24th Judicial District Court. Wicker, who also is from New Jersey, understood Shipman's desire to work in New Orleans. She says she benefited from the judge's mentoring and tries to pass on what she learned to Kean Miller's younger lawyers.

Most of Shipman's practice has been in federal court, though she has handled cases throughout Louisiana.

"Something I love about my work here is that no matter how contentious the issues are in a case, lawyers on all sides still generally treat one another with respect. For example, we will share a beer together following an out-of-town deposition."

She has been involved with the Homeless Experience Legal Protection (HELP) program U.S. District Judge Jay Zainey started in 2004.

"I've assisted with something as simple as notarizing a document to something as complicated as helping someone with an out-of-state child custody issue," she said.

Shipman also has volunteered with Rebuilding Together New Orleans, repairing houses for low-income residents in several Kean Miller-sponsored projects.

Shipman spends as much time as possible with her husband and daughters and said one of the things she enjoys about Kean Miller is that the firm's many female attorneys face the same challenges she does in balancing work and family life. •

— Susan Buchanan

FIRM ASSOCIATED

