

# FORTUNE 52

By Beverly Fortune

This column is dedicated to honoring 52 different Long Island women who make significant, unique and lasting contributions to their communities and workplaces.



Featured This Week

**Sari Friedman, P.C.**  
Principal Partner

The Law Offices Of  
Sari M. Friedman, P.C.

Divorce and child custody issues were much different in the late 1980s when Sari Friedman, principal of The Law Offices of Sari M. Friedman, P.C., was in family court on a case and heard a father tell the judge, “Kids need dads, not visitors.”

In 1990, inspired by that man’s sentiment, Sari began working with Father’s Rights, a not-for-profit all-volunteer organization that seeks, through equal parenting rights, to ensure that children maintain a continuing, nurturing relationship with both parents after divorce or separation. Sari says she was at “the helm of a movement of fathers who wanted to be more recognized as nurturing, caring fathers of their children.”

While there are no hard statistics on how many men have benefited from this group, Sari says, “It has helped a lot of men. The group helps them become better litigants in terms of what to look for in themselves, their attorney, and the court system, and how to best present their situation. That has been very valuable to so many.”

For decades, men and women did not have parity in family court; the women, for the most part, received custody and other divorce benefits. But Sari helped change that, because she saw that many men were being hurt by the system.

“I was meeting men who were truly interested in their kids,” says Sari. “I was able to see beyond the obvious that these were people with real needs, and that I could help them maximize what they could get [in custody proceedings].”

Father’s Rights participants meet at the

Levittown Public Library and at the Deer Park Public Library. Sari developed the concept of having legal counsel at every meeting, to provide literature, learning and support.

“The fathers walk away more educated about the process,” explains Sari. “The Internet has had a tremendous impact on information. They can go to my website and access so much information that sometimes they get all of their questions answered [without a consultation].”

Sari has an interesting theory: “First society changes, and then the law.”

So how do men who are preparing for court battles with their ex-wives feel about having a female lawyer pleading their case?

“Many men believe they are better off having a woman represent them,” says Sari, and she has represented them well, providing some precedent-setting cases in court.

Sari’s Garden City firm, which concentrates in matrimonial and family law, was established more than 20 years ago. During that time, Sari has written and published many articles. She also conducts lectures and seminars on matrimonial law and has been interviewed on radio and television on custody, visitation and child support issues.

Honored by the LI Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) for outstanding achievement in the business community in 1999, Sari is also listed in *Who’s Who in American Law*. Sari is the mother of two daughters and is an avid golfer. 📞

To contact Sari, call 516-222-1030, e-mail her at [sarilaw@msn.com](mailto:sarilaw@msn.com), or visit [www.sarilaw.com](http://www.sarilaw.com).

*If you know a super woman who deserves good Fortune—and a profile—e-mail your nominations to Beverly at [bfortune@longislandpress.com](mailto:bfortune@longislandpress.com).*

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