



The Collaborative Family Law Institute

95 Merrick Way, Suite 420, Coral Gables, FL 33134

www.collaborativefamlaw.com



Robert J. Merlin, Esq., President

Attorney Robert J. Merlin is a partner in the Law Offices of Robert J. Merlin, P.A. and the President of the Collaborative Family Law Institute.

Practicing law in the State of Florida for over 30 years, Merlin is Florida Bar Board Certified in Marital and Family Law and specializes in marital and family law, especially collaborative family law, as a means of amicably dissolving marriages and resolving family disputes. He is also a member of the Board of the Florida Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court Parenting Coordinators Advisory Board and the University of Florida Levin College of Law Center on Children and Families Advisory Board.

Merlin is a member of the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, Collaborative Family Lawyers of South Florida and many other legal associations. He received the 1998 Miami-Dade Guardian Ad Litem award and the 2006 Put Something Back Pro Bono award. He also has a long history of involvement in various community organizations, and is a past chair of Jewish Community Services of South Florida, Inc.

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Lana M. Stern, Ph.D., Vice President

Lana M. Stern, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and licensed marriage and family therapist who has been in private practice in Coral Gables for 25 years. She is a member of the American Psychological Association, Florida and Dade County Psychological Associations and the International Association of Collaborative Professionals.

She is Vice President of the Collaborative Family Law Institute and a member of the Executive and Marketing committees. She is the Miami-Dade delegate representing mental health professionals for the Collaborative Family Law Council of Florida.

Stern has served as an educator, counselor, and trainer in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Previously with Drake, Beam, Morin, an outplacement corporation, as a Career Consultant and corporate trainer, she has expertise in treating depression, anxiety disorders, trauma, child sexual abuse and works with couples/divorce counseling, individuals, adults and adolescents. She taught the divorce education course, "Positive Transitions," for divorcing parents. She has co-authored a chapter on "Collaborative Law" for The Florida Bar's Dissolution of Marriage book. She has written, presented and participated in numerous workshops about the "Role of the Mental Health Professional in Collaborative Divorce." Stern serves as an Adjunct Professor at Florida International University, supervising Master's level, Mental Health and School Counselors during their Practicum and Internship. She received the FPA "Outstanding Contribution to Psychology in the Public Interest" award and DCPA "Certificate of Commendation" award in 1993 for her work in the area of Child Sexual Abuse.

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Philip J. Shechter, CPA, Treasurer

Philip J. Shechter, CPA*/ABV, CVA, is the lead partner for Cherry, Bekaert & Holland's Litigation Support and Business Valuation practice which is based in South Florida and has a resource network that stretches from Washington, DC to Miami. The practice focuses on commercial litigation, business valuation and marital dispute resolution cases.

Shechter, who is treasurer of the Collaborative Family Law Institute, frequently serves as a "neutral CPA" in divorce matters, working jointly with both the husband and wife. In this capacity he performs a lifestyle analysis; prepares a schedule of assets and liabilities; calculates alimony and child support; and values businesses and other assets.

Shechter is a Florida Supreme Court-Certified Family Training Program Trainer, and a member of the Business Valuation Institute, Collaborative Family Lawyers Institute and Institute of Business Appraisers.

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Elaine King, CFP[®], CDEA[™], Secretary

Elaine King serves as Managing Director of Wealth Planning at the Lubitz Financial Group where she implements strategies aimed at facilitating clients' understanding, structuring and managing of wealth around an actionable plan. Her multi-faceted role includes advising on retirement planning, saving for educational needs, estate planning, family meetings and financial competency programs for children and women.

King serves as Secretary of the Collaborative Family Law Institute and is President of the Miami-Dade Financial Planning Association. She is a Florida Supreme Court Certified Family Mediator, a Certified Financial Planner[®] professional and a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst[™].

Often appearing and quoted before national media outlets, King is the author of the book *Family and Money Matters*. She mentors children for Educate Tomorrow, and supports CIMA, a shelter for homeless children, in her native Peru.

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