

# AS SEEN IN *Forbes, Fortune & Entrepreneur*

LOUISVILLE LEADERS IN LAW



## Empathy in Advocacy

Decades of experience helps Goldberg Simpson's Louis Waterman guide clients through the legal and emotional challenges of divorce.

“In terms of emotional pain, divorce is at the top of the scale,” says Louis Waterman, head of the domestic relations group at Goldberg Simpson. “As a family law attorney, my job is to help clients who are in a great deal of pain make good decisions about their finances, their family, and their future. When they have a moment of panic, they need to know that someone they trust is by their side.”

A Louisville native, Waterman began his legal career at Goldberg Simpson. Originally a business litigator, he transitioned to family law after assisting another attorney on a divorce case involving a friend's family. A true “people person” by nature, he soon realized that family law was a better fit for his skills and personality. This career change has served him well over the last four decades, from founding his own successful family law firm to serving as a Family Court judge. After completing his term on the bench, Waterman was convinced by his longtime mentor Fred Goldberg to return to his roots at Goldberg Simpson.

“One of the things that makes us different here is that we are really good at taking care of people,” Waterman says. “Any decent law firm can take care of the legal side of a divorce, but most of them are not interested in dealing with the emotional side. When a client is upset because of something the other side did, we care.”

As a former Family Court judge, Waterman balances empathy with a uniquely pragmatic approach to the law. After an extensive listening session, he presents his clients with several likely outcomes, including a worst-case scenario of how the facts of the case could play out in the courtroom. His advice? Focus on how much you love your kids, rather than how much you hate your ex.

“It's easy for people to get lost in the rage and anger of a divorce, and for them to lose sight of what happens on the other side,” Waterman says. “Do they really want to miss out on a graduation or a bar mitzvah just because they can't be in the same room as their former spouse?”

### ABOVE AND BEYOND

An active member of multiple professional and community organizations, Waterman is perhaps best known in legal circles for his pioneering work fiercely advocating for the parental rights of LGBTQ+ clients. In 2015, he notably authored and edited the Kentucky section of an amicus brief in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that established the marriage rights of same-sex couples. For Waterman, these cases are about more than civil rights; they're about helping families move on with their lives.

“It doesn't matter if it's a same-sex couple or a high-asset couple; there are no winners in a divorce,” says Waterman. “We're working with human beings who are under tremendous emotional stress, and we're helping them solve their problems in a way that everyone can live with.”



FROM LEFT: Louis Waterman, Member; Lana Schroeder, Associate; Hayden Justice, Associate; and Spencer Brooks, Partner. Photos by Sam English and Dena English.