

TAKING CARE OF COMMUNITY

Dedication is Elizabeth Wakeman's hallmark.

By MELISSA RUBALCABA RISKE | Photo by FROM ME 2 YOU PHOTOGRAPHY

Even before she had her own child, Elizabeth Felt Wakeman was working with her neighbors to ensure her community took care of the parks and playgrounds.

Taking care of one's community was just one of the many lessons Wakeman says she learned from her parents as she grew up in Inverness with her two siblings. Wakeman says she remembers helping her mother, a real estate agent, pulling weeds and shoveling snow to prepare for house showings. And she speaks with pride about her father, a World War II Army veteran and graduate of Harvard Law School who went on to serve for 20 years as a judge in Cook County Circuit Courts. Wakeman says he was a big influence in her own decision to become a lawyer.

Although she calls herself shy, she has certainly risen above her own fears to build her successful career as an attorney, serve her community in appointed and elected positions, and to step up in countless volunteer opportunities. Just as her parents included her in their work, Wakeman says she has tried to find ways to share her work with her family, too.

It is this same dedication she demonstrates to her clients. Whether she is handling a personal injury case or dealing with the emotions of divorce and other delicate family law cases, Wakeman has a genuine interest in her client's well-being, says Stephanie Thompson, who has worked as a

paralegal for Wakeman for over three years.

"She's just very down to earth," Thompson says.

Thompson says it's not unusual for Wakeman to see her attorney-client relationship develop into a friendship over time.

"I am absolutely a partner with my clients," Wakeman says. "We work to create and execute a strategy. It is incredibly rewarding to see people through to the other side."

Wakeman and her husband moved to Lake in the Hills in 1994. Wakeman says she wanted to get involved and get to know more people, and that is how she found herself collaborating with neighbors to establish the village's park and recreation programs.

"We had parks, but no one was taking care of them," she says.

The neighbors volunteered to build the department in those early days, developing recreation programming through their network of contacts, printing brochures from their home computer and even signing up for classes to help get things off to a good start. Wakeman says she took a scrapbooking class, and to this day loves the hobby.

For Wakeman, her community service did, indeed, open the door to meeting more people, becoming involved in her community, and forming deep



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friendships. She even served as a village trustee. She speaks with pride about her son, an Eagle Scout, and the time she and her husband volunteered as adult leaders with the organization.

"In everything she does, Liz is committed to her community," says Denise Wasserman Haugk, former village clerk for Lake in the Hills.

Thompson says Wakeman is a role model. And although the successful attorney may be reluctant to acknowledge too much praise, there's no doubt about her dedication to the field of law, her family, and her community.

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