



## Guiding Families With Compassion

### The Estate Planning Approach of Lisa Reilly Payton

**F**or Lisa Reilly Payton, Senior Partner at Frazer Ryan Goldberg & Arnold LLP, the path to estate planning law began with a deeply personal experience. “I was inspired to pursue a career in law, specifically estate planning, after my mother went through the probate process in connection to my father’s estate,” she recalls. “I saw how much estate planning attorneys could help in this process.” Today, she focuses her practice on estate planning, tax planning, and entity formation, with a particular passion for helping families preserve wealth and minimize estate taxes.

Payton’s client-centered approach is rooted in listening first. “Every client is different, and you must take the time to understand their concerns and needs,” she emphasizes. Her goal is to create estate plans that reflect not only her client’s financial realities but also plans that are in line with their family dynamics, values, and long-term wishes.

What sets her apart, Payton believes, is empathy formed by her own life experience. “I would like to think of myself as an empathetic listener who is able to put my personal experience in dealing with estate and trust administration to use,” she says. That combination of compassion and expertise helps clients navigate decisions that are often emotional or complex.

One misconception Payton hopes to dispel is that estate planning is only for the ultra-wealthy. “If you have minor children, you need an estate plan,” she says firmly. “If you have assets you want to ensure are left to loved ones the way you choose, you need an estate plan. You also need an estate plan to plan for your incapacity.” To her, these tools are essential—not exclusive.

A lifelong learner, Payton stays current through seminars, reading, podcasts, and regular conversations with colleagues. She strives to lead with integrity and professionalism, noting that being a

leading lawyer means “striving to be the best in your field and always learning how to improve your practice.” At times, that includes hard conversations. “My job is to be the best advocate I can for my clients, which sometimes means giving them advice they may not want to hear but that is ultimately in their best interest.”

Beyond her practice, Payton is committed to serving the community. She supports organizations such as ChildHelp and participates in programs like Wills for Heroes, offering estate planning services for first responders. She often speaks at churches and community gatherings, presenting Wills and Trusts 101 seminars to help individuals understand their options.

What she enjoys most, however, is helping people through challenging transitions. When she’s not practicing law, Payton finds balance spending time in nature with her husband, son, and puppy, attending baseball games, practicing yoga, and traveling with her family.

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