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FIRM - ASSOCIATED

Joanne Mantis

People could say Joanne Mantis was born into the practice of maritime law. Descended from a Greek shipping family, she was exposed to the industry at an early age.

“Boarding ships when I was 13 years old, I would hear my father talking to captains and solving problems regarding issues on the ships, and I thought this might be what I want to do,” she said.

She attended Tulane University for undergraduate studies and law school and finished with a certificate in maritime law. She decided on King, Krebs & Jurgens because they had a great reputation in this area.

“My father was thrilled,” she said. “(My parents) always pushed us to set high goals and achieve them, and 25 years ago it was an accomplishment for women to attend law school.”

Her focus has led her into some memorable cases. Mantis represented two parishes in the BP oil spill case and says it was very challenging to work toward a fair resolution, given the political and emotional climate.

One of her proudest accomplishments is being admitted to the bar in both Greece and Louisiana. Practicing in Greece for 15 years, her biggest challenge was moving back to New Orleans in 2011 and starting from scratch in the legal community.

Throwing herself into volunteer work helped her assimilate. This year, she co-chaired the Mad Hatter event benefiting the New Orleans Opera Women’s Guild, and last year she chaired a highly successful annual fundraiser at her son’s school.

When not working, she likes to travel. Her family returns to Greece every summer, and she loves to scuba dive there and in places like Honduras and the Caymans.

Being multi-lingual has been an asset, and Mantis advises aspiring lawyers to learn another language to assist them in the increasingly global nature of law, particularly in a port city like New Orleans.

Mantis says she is back to stay in the city. Proud of her Greek heritage, she someday sees herself taking an active role in her father’s company, spending time with family and expanding her volunteer work.

—Leslie Quinn

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