

# TOP ★ LAWYERS

## THE NEXT GENERATION

We went looking for Baltimore's up-and-coming legal stars and found 20 to watch



**MARY ALANE DOWNS DOESN'T MEASURE** her professional success by how much publicity she gets. "Rarely as a defense attorney do you get your name in the paper for being successful," says the graduate of Mount St. Mary's College and the University of Maryland School of Law, who has more than 20 years' experience in general litigation, personal injury, and medical malpractice law.

She does, however, recall a particular victory that hit the front page a few years back: "I represented an OB/GYN in a Down syndrome case in which the allegation was that there was an inaccurate reading of a [prenatal test] used to detect genetic abnormalities," she says. Although the mother had declined to follow-up with an amniocentesis, a more accurate test, she filed suit, claiming that the doctor had given her incorrect information and that she would have terminated the pregnancy had she known that her baby had Down syndrome. At the time of the trial, the child was about five years old, says Downs, who won the case with the help of an expert from the Children's Hospital Boston.

"It really was an eye-opener for everybody involved in the case as to how special these kids are and how well they can do. He was a very sweet little boy. To say, 'I would prefer that he not have ever been born' is a tough one for most juries."

Downs, who has been with her current firm since 1985, defends physicians, practice groups and hospitals in virtually every county in the state. "[My cases] run the gamut—some are wrongful death cases, some are people claiming injury from surgery, not diagnosing cancer, babies born with cerebral palsy—anything that can go wrong in a medical setting," says the attorney. "Typically I'm retained by hospitals or physicians' insurance companies."

For the past two years, she also has been on the faculty of the Maryland Institute for Continuing Professional Education of Lawyers (MICPEL), and she often speaks at hospitals on malpractice topics, from documentation to how to talk to a patient's family when there's been a problem.

In her non-billable time, the Cockeysville resident is president of the Greencroft Community Association and regularly attends her two children's baseball and basketball games. "My husband is the commissioner for the Roland Park Baseball League, so most of our spring is spent on the baseball field," adds Downs.

### Mary Alane Downs

#### MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

Age: 45 ★ Firm: Morgan Shelsby

Carlo Downs & Everton ★

Phone: 410.584.2800 ★ Practice

Areas: Civil Litigation; Medical

Malpractice; Insurance Defense

★ Hourly Rate: \$150-225

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