

WOMEN AT BECKER SHARE STORIES OF RESILIENCE IN NEW BOOK

By [Madison Arnold](#) | September 28, 2026, 4:43 PM EDT

[Becker & Poliakoff PC](#) shareholder Jamie Dokovna knew from a young age that she wanted two things in life: To become an attorney and a mother.

However, while the West Palm Beach, Florida-based lawyer was building a successful employment practice, she started having doubts about whether she'd be able to have children as she struggled to conceive.

While going through in vitro fertilization treatment, Dokovna faced multiple unsuccessful pregnancies, including a few that resulted in late-term losses, before finally having her son Jude.



Jamie Dokovna - Becker

"Sometimes, things don't look like they are envisioned when you're younger, and just because it's not necessarily what you envisioned it would be doesn't mean that it's not worth it in the end," Dokovna told Law360 Pulse. "I knew what I wanted, and I knew that it was important to us."

Dokovna's experience is among the 18 stories included in "Resilience: Essays by Women in Law," a new book produced by women at Becker.

Released by Archway Publishing on Aug. 21, the book explores various ways that women attorneys and executives at the firm have overcome adversity in their personal and professional lives. In sharing their experiences, the women at the firm say, they have formed an even stronger bond.

"Even though you're friends with a lot of your colleagues, sharing these stories makes you see this different side of them, and in some respects, makes you closer with them on account of it," Dokovna said.

Giving 'More Grace'

The book is the brainchild of Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based shareholder Donna DiMaggio Berger, who got the idea about two years ago while attending the Miami Book Fair. She listened to a panel discussion on an essay book and thought, "We could do that at Becker."

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"People, if they know each other's stories, they understand each other more. They give each other more grace, and so I said 'I'm going to do this,'" DiMaggio Berger said.

DiMaggio Berger reached out to women she thought would be willing to participate or whose stories she already knew a little bit about. As the only woman on the firm's management committee, DiMaggio Berger said, she "just wanted to light a path for the other women."

"We should know each other's stories. We should collaborate," she said, adding, "I will tell you the end result, I thought, was also really inspiring, regardless of gender."

DiMaggio Berger said she's sensed a lot of camaraderie among male partners that is borne of activities like golfing together, and she wanted to inspire women at Becker to make the same sort of connections.

So far, DiMaggio Berger said, she's seen "tremendous value" internally by just working on the project with her colleagues.

"I feel like I know these partners, these women better," DiMaggio Berger said. "The value externally is people will see themselves in these stories particularly. And it doesn't have to just be women in law, although, obviously, that's where we are."

Ultimately, DiMaggio Berger wrote the book's introduction and dedication, edited the book and authored an essay of her own titled "Unapologetically Visible: A Journey Through the Community Association Industry."

In her work, DiMaggio Berger said, she discusses the challenges of being an innovator in law. For instance, she created a legislative lobbying group in Florida meant to address sprinkler retrofitting in older high-rise buildings.



**Donna DiMaggio
Berger - Becker**

"I think attorneys, on the whole, are pretty risk-averse. They're change-averse, and I was the type of attorney that was like, 'We should do this, and we should do that,'" DiMaggio Berger told Law360 Pulse.

At the time, DiMaggio Berger said, Becker had a lot of clients throughout Florida, many of whom were on fixed incomes, and buildings were pushing back against retrofitting.

"And I said, 'Wow, there's a powerful grassroots movement here that we could really build on.' And so we did. ... And then I talked about the fact that, you know, that created some ripples in the industry, and it drew some fire," DiMaggio Berger said. "I'm a very young attorney, just like trying to navigate these things, trying to navigate incoming fire from the people that we're doing battle with legislatively."

DiMaggio Berger also explored her experience developing a training program called Board Member Boot Camp, as well as a podcast called "Take it to the Board" to address the community association lifestyle but in an entertaining way, she said.

"I think the essay was just like, 'If there's things that you're passionate about, do it, go for it, but see it through to completion.' That's been the through line in my career — is coming up with an idea, but making sure you work it until it works," DiMaggio Berger said.

Overcoming Obstacles

Doreen Fiorelli said she was naturally involved in the book because she's Becker's chief marketing officer. While Fiorelli is not a lawyer, DiMaggio Berger first came to her for assistance in finding a publishing company.

"I was probably one of the first to hear about the project, and I'll be honest, I was a little bit skeptical about what this was going to look like at the end of the day, and would it be interesting enough," Fiorelli said. "I think, in our daily lives when we're just siloed with our regular work, what we do from day to day ... we don't look back and realize where we came from."

She decided to sit down and write an essay herself that explored her work in opera after a severe childhood bout with chickenpox left her with a 106-degree fever, delirium and difficulty breathing.



Doreen Fiorelli – Becker

Fiorelli said in her essay that she had been given last rites and rushed into surgery before emerging alive, although minus a rib that needed to be removed to insert a tube in her lungs to drain fluid. The recovery was likely to be long, and her doctor suggested to her parents that she take singing lessons to regain lung capacity.

Ultimately, Fiorelli landed a spot in a music conservatory before eventually transitioning into her business career, which she discussed in her essay, "Aria of Ambition."

"I'm a former classically trained soprano, and I sang professionally when I was much younger, and it was a short-lived attempt. But nonetheless, it really shaped me, and I realized too that it also positioned me for a role in business, which normal people would not really think of, because who thinks of an artist and at some point transferring into a completely different field, particularly the legal industry?" Fiorelli said.

Fiorelli said that in writing her essay, she hoped readers would get the message not to discount other roles they've had in their life and their ability to contribute to a business organization.

"They are probably very applicable, and you may not think that if you're trying to make a career transition like, 'How am I going to do this? What are the skills that I have in my background that would lend itself to it?'" she said. "Behind all of that is that you probably have skills you don't realize, and you should maybe try if you're interested in some other type of field, and you might be surprised by the results at the end of the day."

Fiorelli added that the book communicates to women that they can succeed in an industry that is still male-dominated.

"It is harder for women. I've been in this field for a very, very long time, and without a doubt, it is harder for women to advance in this field, much harder than it is for men. But it can be done, and I think that really is the underlying message that if you want it, you could have it and others have overcome all different types of obstacles and have become successful," Fiorelli said.

'Journey to Freedom'

Aymelis Amaral, Becker's chief financial officer, said she also wanted to share her experience to inspire future professionals and those who may think it's not possible to achieve what they hope.

Any young girl that even under the circumstances that ... I had to overcome, when you work hard, when you stay focused, you can always achieve your goals, no matter how far or how hard they seem.

In her essay, "A Journey to Freedom," Amaral told her experience migrating from Cuba at just 16 to escape the communist regime there.



Aymelis Amaral – Becker

Following riots in the summer of 1994, Fidel Castro opened the border and allowed three days for anyone who wanted to escape to do so without repercussions. She departed on her uncle's boat, leaving behind her mother, grandparents and other family members.

Halfway through her journey to the United States, the boat's engine failed, and its occupants were left without food, water or radio communications. After floating in the Straits of Florida for a full 14 hours, a [U.S. Coast Guard](#) vessel appeared to help, but ultimately took them and other refugees to Guantánamo Bay. After six months in a camp, she was eventually taken to the U.S.

Once she got to the U.S. and started in an English as a second language program, Amaral flourished. She learned the language in less than six months, joined the National Honor Society and took honors and AP courses before graduating high school at the top of her class.

During that time, she said, her desire for freedom and a better future was stronger than any challenge she had to overcome. She said in her essay that any success she has today is the result of never giving up on her dreams and staying focused on her goals.

"The law firm world, the accounting world — because I'm the CFO, it's typically male-dominated, but anyone, any young girl that even under the circumstances that ... I had to overcome, when you work hard, when you stay focused, you can always achieve your goals, no matter how far or how hard they seem," Amaral told Law360 Pulse.

--Editing by Alanna Weissman and Jay Jackson Jr.