

Domestic Violence

I wasn't able to be a part of the show this week, but I left the mic in very capable hands. Barbara King, partner at Tully Rinckey PLLC practicing family and matrimonial law, stepped in for me, along with guest host Tom Carr, criminal defense attorney at Tully Rinckey, and special guest Lisa Frisch who is the Executive Director of the Legal Project.

The Legal Project is a great resource not only for victims of domestic abuse, but for anyone who is unable to afford an attorney. They are a not-for-profit organization who offer free or low cost legal services for those who are living paycheck-to-paycheck and simply don't have the funds available to get the help they need.

Tonight's topic focused on the issue of domestic violence, including identifying what exactly constitutes as abuse, typical abusers, and what resources are available to both victims and those accused. We were luckily enough to have Tom Carr on hand to help discuss these items, as he has seen domestic violence from both sides of the fence. He has worked as a District Attorney in Brooklyn and as Bureau Chief in the Special Victims Unit in Rensselaer County, where he prosecuted domestic violence cases and now works as a defense lawyer handling the same situations.

There are stereotypes of who a typical abuser is – predominately of a male alcoholic who is on the lower end of the economic scale. This isn't the case, as Tom pointed out. They can be anyone from a successful doctor to a professional businessman, in all social groups, and not necessarily male. While most statistics show it is mainly women who are being victimized, that may be because men are more reluctant to report abuse. There has also been a rise in abuse cases involving same gender couples.

One of the interesting things that came up during the discussion tonight was the idea of an integrated court system. This is a relatively new idea where instead of having two different judges for your criminal court case and your family court case ruling concerning your domestic violence issue, there is only one judge who hears everything. This makes it much easier and provides continuity for decisions.

If you need legal help regarding domestic violence, or have questions on anything you heard on tonight's show, call Barbara King or Tom Carr at Tully Rinckey PLLC. They can be reached by calling 518-218-7100 or by visiting our website at www.tullylegal.com