

# Brianne Thomas

*Boyd Kenter Thomas & Parrish*

**B**rianne Thomas juggles being a mom of four small children with the challenges of her law career. In numerous professional instances, she has been called the “little girl.” She overcomes this stigma by winning: Winning trials, winning arguments, and winning over judges.

“Every woman lawyer has those stories,” Thomas says. “Male attorneys who won’t look at you when you talk. Who think you’re the court reporter. Who are uncomfortable trying a case against a woman.”

A seasoned litigator, she specializes in personal injury and workers’ compensation cases.

Thomas was the first person in her family to go to college and also to go to law school. In fact, she’d never been out of Missouri until she went to college at the University of Arizona, where she earned a B.S. in Management Information Systems. She returned to Missouri for law school and earned her J.D. from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law.

She has been with her firm since her days as a law clerk and is now the managing partner.

“My partners treat me as an equal,” she says. “I’ve had top-notch mentorship. They threw me into the fire with litigation, depositions, trials.”

Early in her career, she worked up a jury trial. Four years after graduating and joined the firm, they asked her to be partner at 29.

In 2012, Thomas received the David J. Dixon Award for Excellence in Appellate Advocacy from the Missouri Bar Founda-

tion to her because Missouri Court of Appeals Western District judges nominated her to receive it. These are the same judges who heard her argue cases, and they acknowledged her as the best.

A very small percentage of trial attorneys are women. One reason is the demands of trial work for women who still have children at home.

“I’m starting a jury trial soon,” Thomas says. “I won’t see my kids for those two weeks. The tension between work and home is difficult. But I do what I need to do. A trial doesn’t happen every week. When I have to be away, I hope my family will forgive me because of what happens the other weeks of the year.”

Thomas volunteers for Jackson County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), which represents abused and neglected children in court. She is also a member of the board of directors for the Rainbow Center, a nonprofit organization that serves adults and children with developmental disabilities.

She calls on the memories of her family when she works with her clients. Her grandmother grew up in foster care before she was adopted. And her other grandmother married at 16 and had eight children, including identical triplets when she was 40.

“They persevered and held their head high,” she says. “That’s what my clients have to do, too. They have to persevere through life-changing injuries and life-changing deaths in the family. As an attorney, I can help them move forward

