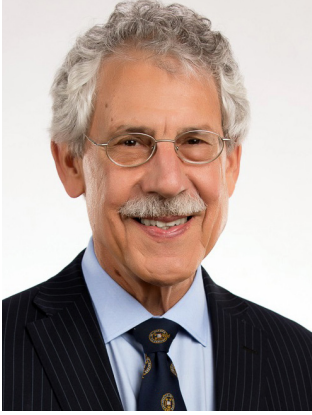


# Certification Matters

## Interview with Philip C. Friday Jr. — 40 Years of Board Certification



Board Certification became generally accepted as a meaningful indicator of your professional competence and experience in a particular field...



**Q. Take me back to 1975. What can you tell me about your legal career and the legal industry at that time?**

**A.** The practice of Family Law was relatively young in 1975. I started my practice in February, 1970, and that was the same year when Title One of the Family Code went into effect.

I was fortunate that 1975 was my fifth year in practice and the Board Certification program had a five-year experience requirement. I didn't hesitate to apply for Board Certification.

**Q. Why did you decide to get Board Certified in Family Law at the time?**

**A.** It seemed clear that having the official recognition by the State Bar of Texas—that you have special competence in a particular field—would be both a boost to building a practice and would give you some greater respect in the court room. It seemed natural for me.

**Q. What was the first Board Certification exam like?**

**A.** It was quite comprehensive and fairly difficult. It truly required you to have both a broad and deep knowledge of Family Law.

**Q. 40 years is a long time to be Board Certified. Why did you do it?**

**A.** TBLS requires that you devote a certain percentage of your practice to your specialty area on an ongoing basis. I have done 90 percent of my practice in Family Law since 1977, so to re-certify every five years has been a natural and worthwhile thing for me.

In addition, Board Certification became generally accepted as a meaningful indicator of your professional competence and experience in a particular field; it came to mean something among your clients, public, and judiciary. So if you continue to do practice in that field, you certainly want to continue to re-certify.

**Q. How does it feel to be part of the first group of Board Certified attorneys in Texas?**

**A.** I could honestly say that I am forever grateful that I had the opportunity to participate at the beginning of the program.

# Certification Matters



Board Certified  
in Family Law  
since 1975.



**Q. How has being Board Certification impacted your career?**

**A.** I have no doubt that Board Certification has helped my career. Clients who have difficult cases are far more likely to hire a Board Certified attorney.

**Q. What has been the highlight of your career?**

**A.** My son, Jonathan Friday, came into practice with me a decade ago. He also became Board Certified in Family Law in 2009, and he now runs our firm. I am very proud of him.



**Q. How has the legal industry, particularly Family Law, changed since 1975?**

**A.** There have definitely been changes in the industry since 1975. The Supreme Court promulgated the new discovery rules in the late 70s, and that fundamentally affected the practice of law in all of the civil areas, especially in the field of Family Law. In the earlier days, discovery in Family Law primarily involved getting a sworn inventory and appraisal. Once the new discovery rules arrived, Family Law litigation became lengthier, more contentious, more expensive, and less collegial.



**Q. Do you plan to maintain Board Certification throughout the rest of your career?**

**A.** I certainly intend to.

**Q. Do you have anything to say to new Family Law attorneys?**

**A.** This may sound old fashioned, but I would recommend that they be absolutely honest in all their dealings, with both judges and opposing counsel. I would recommend having as much empathy as possible for their clients, and for that matter, opposing counsel and the judiciary. Lastly, prepare their cases thoroughly.

