



Petti and Briones PLLC

By Dan Baldwin

Taking the High Road to Success

The high road to success is not often the public's perception of attorneys, but it was just that mantra that brought Fred Petti and Patti Briones together in 2011. Each learned from a young age the importance of being respectful and playing fair and each applies these philosophies to the business and personal aspects of lawyering today. "They instilled in me a level of professionalism," Petti says about three high school coaches whose pictures hang on his office wall. "Their willingness to give so much of themselves, while also setting the highest of standards, is what drives me to always be my best." Briones learned these same lessons closer to home. "I was always aware of the respect people had for him," she said of her father, a policeman in New York who rose through the

ranks to become commissioner. "Not because of his position, but because of the way he treated people, always fair, always honest." It is this high road that has allowed Petti and Briones, PLLC to be successful from inception.

Petti and Briones, PLLC practices in the areas of white collar criminal defense, regulatory defense, administrative law, gaming, tribal law and securities law. White collar litigation, regulatory defense and tribal law account for a large percentage of its corporate energies. "We represent Indian tribes, we represent people who have gaming licenses, we represent health care providers, political figures, and those in the financial industry," Petti says. "It is a diverse practice and each industry has different needs. Frankly, this is what makes the job



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Petti is an experienced trial lawyer and former United States attorney in the Districts of Arizona and Oregon. As a federal prosecutor in both the white collar and organized crime units for ten years, and an attorney and partner with a large Phoenix law firm, Petti provides clients an immeasurable knowledge base. He came to practice law by a circuitous route. "I had a master's degree in history. I was coaching swimming and I was trying to decide whether I wanted to get a Ph.D. in history. I decided to take the LSAT and did well, so I thought 'what the heck.' I tell people, and it's true, that the first lawyer I ever met was a professor on my first day of law school."

Briones, in addition to her legal expertise, has more than 23 years of experience in business, accounting, and financial services. While working in the financial arena, Patti obtained several securities licenses, ranging from general securities and mutual funds to variable annuity and life insurance products. "In my financial

background, I specialized in compliance and securities laws, both federal and blue sky laws," said Patti. "I did a lot of training to ensure compliance with laws and regulations. I also am very familiar with accounting for corporations. I have a solid understanding and can review records from a business perspective, which distinguishes me from many lawyers who haven't worked in the financial sector."

Climbing to the High Road

In 2009, prior to forming Petti and Briones, Briones and Petti worked together. "I was working as a partner with another firm in a hiring phase," said Fred. "I needed to hire an attorney and a friend of mine at church saw the firm's advertisement. She suggested that I speak to her friend Patti. After meeting Patti, it soon became clear to me that we had a nice chemistry and she was born to do this type of work." Briones

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remembers those days as well. “I started working with Fred and really enjoyed his practice area, enjoyed the cases and the diversity of the work we handled,” she said. “With my background in the financial securities industry, it was a good fit.” To close the loop, a few months ago the firm decided to hire a new attorney, Lori MacLeod, the person who suggested Fred hire Patti in 2009.

Petti and Briones, PLLC, is now comprised of three lawyers, an executive assistant, Sherry Samford, and a paralegal, Valerie Godfrey, and they are exploring numerous areas of potential expansion. “We would like to grow,” Petti says. “We talk about growing into Texas and Oregon where we have roots and occasional clients; nothing is set in stone, except that we are definitely in a growth mode.”

Practicing Law with the Human Touch

In addition to taking the high road, the firm believes in practicing with a human touch approach. This means treating opposing counsel, clients, the bench, and different cultures and beliefs with dignity and respect at all costs. “When I was a very young lawyer I clerked for Frank Gordon who was the Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court,” Petti says. “My

first mentor at Lewis and Roca, Dale Danneman, told me to practice with civility and always assume that I would have to explain each of my actions to Frank Gordon in open court. If I was comfortable with what my explanation would be, then I was on the right course. I have carried this with me throughout my years as a lawyer.”

Briones believes this human touch approach is particularly valuable when working with Native American clients. “It’s really an opportunity to understand another culture, another sovereignty and what’s important to their people,” said Patti. “Our approach helps us give them a voice.” Petti notes that the human touch they practice is often missing in today’s legal culture. “As a young prosecutor, I noticed there was a certain level of civility because the criminal bar was small and you were running into the same people all the time,” he said. “I worry that the level of mutual respect is eroding and especially on the government side. Being certain that everybody is a criminal opens the door to tragedy. Many seem to forget we’re dealing with human beings. People make mistakes, but that doesn’t make them evil people. We all fall short in some aspect of our lives.”

At a Glance

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Frederick Petti

- Listed in Best Lawyers
- Arizona's Finest Lawyers
- Fellow, Litigation Counsel of America
- Southwest Super Lawyers
- Martindale-Hubbell AV rated
- Licensed in Arizona, Oregon and Texas state and federal courts and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals
- Member, American Bar Association's White Collar Crime Committee
- Wife, Joan, a psychologist
- Two daughters ages 32 and 14
- Volunteers with daughter's cheer team
- Active on board of church Our Lady of the Angels

Patricia Briones

- Licensed in Arizona state and federal court
- Trained mediator
- Alumnus of the Arizona College of Trial Advocacy
- Member, American Bar Association's Business Law Section
- Husband, Luis, an engineer
- Three children ages 18, 14, 11

Lori MacLeod

- Licensed in Arizona state and federal court
- Husband, Matt, a lawyer
- One daughter, 10 months old
- Secretary, State Bar of Arizona Legal Services Committee
- Member, State Bar of Arizona Peer Review Committee
- Member, AzFLSE Law Related Education Committee
- Alumnus of the State Bar of Arizona Leadership Institute

No "Down the Line" Practice Politics

Petti and Briones, PLLC practices a team approach to all of its cases and believes this is another reason for its success. "When you hire us, you hire all of us," Petti says. "You call and you can get any one of us. It's a team approach and no client is going to be 'shoved down the line' here." With a strong culture of client service, noted Patti, "your representation is not pre-packaged. Part of effective representation is knowing who your clients are, what their business is, and what their needs are. This is the way we practice for each and every case."

One of the reasons Petti left large firm life was that the nature of the business gets very expensive. At Petti and Briones, PLLC, clients can get the high level quality of work you'd expect from a much larger firm, without the elevated

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prices. "One of the things we offer is very high quality work at a reasonable rate," said Fred. "Because of Patti's business experience, we keep our overhead costs down, something that is increasingly important in legal representation in today's economy."

The team approach is evident in the firm's admiration for its members. "I don't think I've had this much fun since I was a brand new prosecutor playing 'cops 'n robbers,'" Petti says, "I feel lucky and fortunate to come into this office every day because these are good people and I enjoy their company." Briones feels the same way. "It is incredible to work as a team with this extraordinary group of individuals," she said. "It enhances our ability to effectively represent our clients...and always with the human touch."