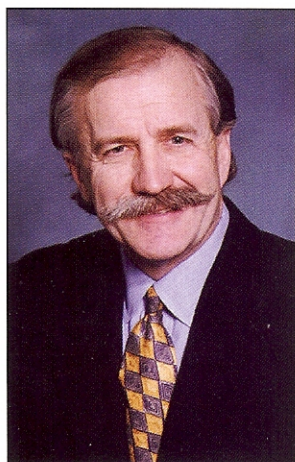


selecting equine attorney



By Mati Jarve
Attorney

YOU HAVE A LEGAL ISSUE INVOLVING A HORSE RELATED MATTER AND YOU KNOW that you need an attorney, but how do you go about retaining the right attorney for your case?

How to Find an Attorney

- If you have a family attorney or have used a law firm in the past, contact them to find out if they can handle your case. If not, ask for a referral to another law firm that can help you.
- If you have a friend, relative or business associate that has had a similar legal matter in the past find out if they can favorably recommend their lawyer to you.
- Contact the local bar association's legal referral service and ask for a referral to a local attorney that practices in the area of your legal matter.
- Use the internet. There are many resources available, such as lawyers.com and findlaw.com.
- Contact me by phone or e-mail. My contact information is provided at the end of this article. I will be happy to provide a free referral to an attorney local to you.

Which Attorney Do I Retain?

- You need to feel comfortable and have confidence in the law firm that you choose. Legal matters are often stressful and lawsuits can last for many months, even years, so it is important to choose an attorney with whom you can establish a rapport.
 - The attorney needs to be licensed in the state in which the legal services are to be provided. In litigated matters it may be necessary to retain an attorney where the lawsuit is venued. For example, if a North Carolina resident purchases a horse from a Texas trainer at the Quarter Horse Congress, depending on the specific terms of the sale, the buyer and seller may both need to retain Ohio licensed attorneys in the event of a dispute that ends up in a lawsuit.
 - Your attorney should have the necessary legal experience and substantive knowledge involved in the matter. It is not enough that a lawyer holds himself out as an equine practitioner if your matter also requires legal experience as a trial lawyer. Some equine attorneys are simply not trial lawyers. On the other hand, if you just need some documents drafted or only require legal advice, there would be no need for a trial specialist.
 - The prospective attorney should be willing to provide you with a written fee agreement and an estimate of the anticipated costs.
 - Do not base your decision on the attorney's hourly rate. Although it may be tempting to hire the lawyer that charges the lowest hourly rate, it may not be the best financial decision. Since a lawyer's hourly rate is usually indicative of his experience and competence, hiring the cheapest lawyer may save you legal fees, but cost you the case. On the other hand, it is usually not necessary to retain an attorney that charges the highest rate either. The highest rates are invariably charged by the larger law firms that cater to corporate clients. Unless you have an unusually complex or high value case, you may end up spending more in legal fees than the case is worth.
 - Many states recognize and certify legal specialties. Whenever possible, seek out board certified attorneys, especially if your matter involves litigation, such as personal injury or malpractice. If you are the plaintiff in such a matter, it is usually possible to retain the attorney on a contingent fee basis.

Mati Jarve is the managing partner of the Marlton, New Jersey law firm of Jarve Kaplan Granato, LLC. He is certified by the New Jersey Supreme Court as a Civil Trial Attorney and the National Board of Trial Attorneys as a Trial Advocate. Licensed in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Arizona, he maintains a national practice in civil litigation, including equine related issues. This article is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. If you have a specific legal question or problem you should consult with an experienced and knowledgeable equine law attorney. Questions, comments or suggestions can be e-mailed to mjarve@nj-triallawyers.com, by visiting www.nj-triallawyers.com or writing to The Way To Go.