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HARVEY A. SCHWARTZ, Boston employment and civil rights lawyer, on Shannon Liss-Riordan ...

Veteran lawyer Harvey A. Schwartz is accustomed to the spotlight, but even he says Shannon E. Liss-Riordan "has been in the middle of an unusual number of high-profile cases this year."

Her record has been all the more impressive, Schwartz suggests, because her achievements came during a year in which she gave birth.

"Shannon's reputation inflated during the course of the year along with her belly, and she developed enormous jury sympathy as a result," he quips.

Schwartz says she is a natural in front of juries. "Her sincerity comes through, and she has a knack for communicating in the courtroom," he says.

He also notes that she is very thorough in preparing her case files.

"Her firm shares office space with us, and her files are expanding throughout the joint space of both firms," he says. "This office generally has a laid-back working atmosphere, but she is the exception - she has been known to burn the late-night oil, even on weekends."

According to Schwartz, Liss-Riordan "is a true believer in people's rights and she is in the profession for the right reasons." Part of her success, he says, comes from not being afraid to take risks, noting that she has won some difficult cases.

"We both get interesting phone calls from people who feel their rights were violated and some just have oddball cases. I've taken my share of those, but when she told me she was representing a policeman who was terminated because he owned adult video stores, I told her even I would not take that."

Liss-Riordan won that case and several other tough battles this year, and Schwartz predicts more people will know her name in the future.

- John O. Cunningham