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▲ Jonathan Marks says he had the first case to get a defendant's verdict against DirecTV. Photo by Karen Elshout

Family law attorney's work has generational effects

Jonathan Marks is building a reputation for handling difficult family law matters with an extra measure of sensitivity.

He is managing attorney at The Marks Law Firm in Creve Coeur, where he has been since completing law school in 1997. He works alongside his father, Murry Marks, a criminal defense and personal injury lawyer. Jonathan represents more than 100 clients each year in matters such as divorce, paternity and prenuptial agreements.

"Many attorneys say they don't like handling family law, but I'm the opposite," he said. "Any time you are dealing with the dissolution of a family, it's tough. You have to help make sure the parties can maintain relationships with their children, and you also have to assist them in making sure things are financially stable. Knowing you can help someone in the most difficult of times is very rewarding for me."

Marks already has some notable actions under his belt. His work on one case, Webb v. Wyciskalla, led to the reinterpretation of the

law necessitating that a bond be posted if a party seeking modification of a custody ruling is more than \$10,000 in debt. And a recent case he argued in the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, Barzilai v. Barzilai, is that court's first opportunity to apply the Hague Treaty. The case involves a divorce and custody issue with international implications.

Marks hasn't confined his practice entirely to family matters. In 2004, he represented more than 1,000 individuals sued for between \$10,000 and \$100,000 each by DirecTV, the satellite television carrier. According to Marks, the suits were against individuals and businesses who bought devices enabling them to pirate satellite programming for free.

"DirecTV launched a letter campaign trying to collect from these people without filing suits," Marks said. "My goal was to get a number of these dismissed for not being substantive in nature, and we did get summary judgment in them. One of them did get tried in Illinois; mine was the first case nationally

Jonathan Marks, 37

- The Marks Law Firm, managing attorney
- University of Missouri-Columbia
- Family Law

to get a defendant's verdict against DirecTV?"

He has presented at continuing legal education seminars on topics such as HIPAA and how it impacts childrens' medical records in the court system. He also speaks about how to help parents and children understand the juvenile court system and about the DirecTV cases. Marks is also dedicated to providing pro bono advice to a number of clients who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford legal advice.

Marks, who will be named to the 2008 Super Lawyers Rising Stars for Missouri and Kansas, said his next major plan is to renovate, expand and add new staff at the office where he and his father practice. **MO**