Doerner has the oldest and most established family law practice of any full-service law firm in Oklahoma. We have handled marital and custody disputes – often referred by solo practitioners and small firms that are inexperienced in the complexities of Oklahoma family law – in courts from Oklahoma City to the Arkansas state line, and from the Kansas border to the Red River. And because our practice is led by a certified mediator, we frequently reach settlements for clients with non-adversarial disagreements, achieving amicable resolution when possible.

Our firm excels at business evaluation and forensic accounting necessary to determine the division of marital assets, particularly regarding family businesses. Oklahoma law is very specific on such issues as valuing goodwill and determining validity of prenuptial agreements, and Doerner lawyers are skilled at working with accountants and CPAs to arrive at fair and accurate determinations.

Child guardianship is another complex family law concern in which we have deep experience. Because guardianship petitions can be filed by any family member, we are well versed in the criteria that courts use to make a custody determination. We can also work with the Department of Human Services to resolve related guardianship issues when necessary.

Doerner helps family law clients with a full range of post-divorce issues, such as estate and wealth management planning, or defense of family businesses sued for such claims as wrongful termination. We view our practice as one of providing seamless assistance on all the complex financial and legal issues of marital dissolution. Our lawyers work together in a team approach to handling cases, and one of us is always available to answer questions or provide help.

Top Areas of Focus

- Marital dissolution and post-decree pleadings, whether contested court actions or in mediations for amicable solutions when possible.
- Division of assets and liabilities in the marital estate, especially those relating to family-owned businesses.
- Child custody, child support and paternity actions, as well as child guardianship petitions.
- Structuring of prenuptial agreements that meet Oklahoma’s rigorous standards for validity.

Case Study: Bringing Business Skills to Marital Asset Division

- **Opportunity:** Dissolutions and legal separations in Oklahoma are complex under the state’s laws regarding division and valuation of community property in the marital estate. This is particularly true regarding family-owned businesses. And even if there is a prenuptial agreement, the Oklahoma Supreme Court has set very specific rules for what makes such an agreement valid.

- **Solution:** We have both the business experience to help structure the division of conventional assets, and the breadth and creativity to address unconventional issues. Our firm has used creative forensic accounting techniques to structure the division of assets and business income derived from a variety of businesses and ventures. A key strength is our ability to account for the enterprise goodwill of a business (which is part of the marital estate) and the personal goodwill of a business owner (which is not part of the division of assets), an issue in which Oklahoma law is unique.

- **Result:** Our lawyers have the financial knowledge to structure domestic relations arrangements that transition assets seamlessly, and offer comprehensive services to help clients get on with their lives after the legal details are completed. For example, we can assist clients with post-divorce estate planning to handle financial issues they might otherwise not consider. It is the kind of seamless assistance that we believe distinguishes Doerner’s family law practice.

**Take Action**

Although many family law disputes settle without trial, Doerner lawyers are fully prepared to provide the vigorous representation each client requires. If a case requires resolution in the courts, we have the experience to represent clients in litigation involving child custody, spousal support, determination of separate property and complex property division and
valuation cases. As one of the few comprehensive family law practices at full-service Oklahoma law firms, we rely on the skills of colleagues within our firm and of expert witnesses to give our clients the authoritative and insightful help they need to resolve disputes and make a successful transition in their lives.

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