

## **Florida Divorce Mediation**

The firm of Harris and Hunt, P.A. is committed to an amicable resolution of your unresolved issues. Mediation is one of the strategies that might be appropriate for you. We spend significant time and effort preparing you for your mediation. We also make sure the mediator receives in advance, a carefully prepared summary of your case issues with relevant attachments to increase your chance of settlement.

### **Information about Mediation:**

In Florida, the courts require that each party attend mediation prior to a court hearing being set. A successful result at mediation is often the most satisfactory outcome for each party.

#### **What is mediation?**

Mediation is a process whereby both parties attempt to reach a mutual agreement of the issues by using the services of a neutral third party (mediator).

#### **What are the advantages of mediation?**

Settling a case in mediation is generally less costly; since disputes resolved in court usually result in greater attorney's fees and overall costs.

Clients usually find it far more satisfying to have input in resolving their issues, whether custody, time-sharing, child and spousal support, or the division of their property and debts rather than having a judge make these personal decisions for them.

#### **What happens if the parties agree to settle at mediation?**

The mediator prepares a written Settlement Agreement that is signed by both parties. That agreement can then be presented to the judge assigned to the case so that a Final Judgment, in strict accordance with the Settlement Agreement, can then be entered.

**Can a mediator force a party to agree to anything?**

No!

**Is mediation required in divorce or modification cases?**

Yes! The Florida Rules of Family Law Procedure require the parties to go to mediation both before temporary relief can be granted and before a final hearing (trial) can be held in the case. The judge has the power to waive the mediation requirements, but is generally reluctant to do so unless there are special or unusual circumstances.

Both parties must agree for there to be a successful mediation agreement. Sometimes mediation wastes time and money because of the antagonistic attitude of one of the parties or his or her attorney or lack of preparation. Since our attorneys are experienced family law attorneys, a client can be assured that if the case is capable of being settled, the attorney will set an atmosphere where agreement is possible.

We believe Florida divorce mediation skills are essential in a quality family law attorney.

**What type of preparation is required for mediation?**

Prior to the mediation, you will meet with your attorney to discuss the mediation process and what to expect during the mediation. At the meeting, your attorney will go over the various strengths and weaknesses of the case, the outstanding issues, and discuss with you the best strategy to obtain the relief you are seeking. It is also important that you understand and anticipate your spouse's positions on issue important to you and develop with your attorney, a

strategy and approach to your negotiations, prior to your mediation.

**Do the attorneys with Harris and Hunt, P.A. serve as mediators?**

Both Ms. Harris and Mr. Hunt have often served as mediators in marital and family law matters, which experience enhances your success at mediation.