

MELISSA NILSSON

Attorney, Shareholder

mnilsson@hensonefron.com | (612) 252-2829

"I believe that attorneys should treat their clients with dignity and respect, in the same way they would want one of their own family members treated while going through this difficult process."

SERVICES

Family Law

CREDENTIALS

EDUCATION

- J.D., University of North Dakota School of Law, 2000
- B.A., University of North Dakota, 1997

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Minnesota

CERTIFICATIONS

- Qualified Neutral under Rule 114 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice

HONORS

- 2022 Notable Women in Law Honoree, Twin Cities Business
- 2021 Minnesota Lawyer Attorney of the Year
- Named 2022 Minneapolis Family Law "Lawyer of the Year", Best Lawyers in America® (honoring a single lawyer in each specific practice and metropolitan area)
- Listed in The Best Lawyers in America®, 2015-2025, Family Law
- Selected for inclusion in Minnesota Super Lawyers®, 2014-2024
- Selected for inclusion in Top 50: Women Minnesota Super Lawyers®, 2017-2024
- Selected for inclusion in Top 100: Minnesota Super Lawyers®, 2018, 2020-2024
- Selected for inclusion in Minnesota Super Lawyers-Rising Stars®, 2008-2012
- Featured in Minnesota Monthly Magazine as a Top Lawyer in Minnesota 2022-2024: Family Law
- Featured in Minnesota Monthly Magazine as The Best Lawyers in America® 2019
- Judicial Law Clerk, The Honorable James T. Swenson, Chief Judge of Hennepin County and former Presiding Judge of Hennepin County Family Court

**ATTORNEYS
OF THE YEAR 2021**

ABOUT ME

I am the calm eye of the storm providing clients with empathy and unwavering confidence to navigate this overwhelming time in their lives.

It sounds basic, yet it's true—helping people is the most rewarding part of my job. I enjoy talking with people and finding common ground to build great relationships. By their own admission, clients are often not the best version of themselves during this time, so bringing them supportive peace and calm is important to me.

With over 15 years of family law experience, I help spouses, parents, and grandparents with disputes involving:

- Spousal Maintenance / Alimony
- Business and Property Valuation and Division
- Analysis of Tax Issues
- Analysis and Preservation of Nonmarital Interests
- Analysis of Executive Compensation
- Retirement Benefits Valuation and Division
- Child Custody
- Parenting Time / Visitation
- Child Support
- Separate Maintenance and Legal Separation
- Paternity
- Third Party Custody
- Third Party Visitation
- Grandparent Visitation
- Post Decree Proceedings
- Family Law Appeals

Clients turn to me because they are concerned about their future and confused about the complicated process. Clients are able to ask me any question without the fear of feeling foolish because of the relationship that has been created. Although I am empathetic and supportive of clients, I am also a realist: I explain in layman's terms the process and potential issues, and set reasonable expectations about the outcome.

Being a lawyer and a parent, I am a multitasker and master organizer, which enables me to prepare my clients well. I am always thinking one step ahead in order to avoid surprise. Family law litigation is an emotional and stressful time. My clients need me to be their rock and my unflappable personality allows me to do so.

CLIENTS SAY:

"Melissa is the perfect combination of efficiency and compassion."

"Her approachability makes her stand out far and above others."

"She's an excellent communicator and made a complicated process understandable."

"Melissa is the whole package—legal expertise, empathy, and a strong advocate."

"Her strong moral compass always guides her."

ASSOCIATIONS

PROFESSIONAL

- American Bar Association, Family Law Section
- Minnesota State Bar Association, Family Law Section
- Hennepin County Bar Association, Family Law Section, Co-Chair, 2014-2016

COMMUNITY

- Volunteer, Hennepin County Unbundled Legal Services
- Volunteer Attorney, Volunteer Lawyers Network Family Law Clinic
- Member, Minnesota State Bar Association, Unmarried Couples Task Force



HENSON EFRON

- Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator, Committee to Keep Judge Swenson, Chief Judge of Hennepin County, 2008
- Volunteer, National Multiple Sclerosis Society

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

ARTICLES

- Featured in "Melissa Nilsson: Clear Solutions to Complex Problems," Attorney at Law Magazine, December 2019
- Featured in "Where Intellect and Civility are Key," Attorney at Law Magazine – Women in Law Special Issue, November 2014
- Co-Author, "Family Caselaw and Legislative Update," Family Law Institute, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017
- Co-Author, "Property Division in High Net Worth Divorces," Family Law Institute, 2009
- Co-Author, "Understanding Non-Marital Tracing," Family Law Institute, 2007
- Co-Author, "Judicial Contempt Outline" with Judge James T. Swenson, Judicial College, 2003

PRESENTATIONS

- Co-Presenter, "Preserving Trust Assets in a Divorce Proceeding—Keeping the Money in the Family," Probate & Trust Law Institute, 2015
- Panel Member, "New Lawyer Experience: Quick Answers to Questions That Friends, Relatives and Strangers Will Ask You at Cocktail Parties," Minnesota State Board CLE, 2014
- Co-Presenter, "Family Caselaw and Legislative Update," Family Law Institute, 2013-2015, 2017
- Presenter, "Basics of Custody and Parenting Time" and "A Beginner's Guide to Property Division," Family Law Institute, 2013-2016
- Co-Presenter, "Get Ready to Deviate: Calculating Gross Income of Business Owners in light of Haeefe v. Haeefe," HCBA CLE, 2013
- Co-Presenter, "Your First Minnesota Divorce Case," Minnesota State Board CLE, 2013 and 2014