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SPECIAL REPORT: HIGH-POWERED ATTORNEYS

Carey Cooper



When Carey Cooper turned 18, she couldn't wait to escape small-town living in Connecticut and attend California State University, Northridge in the big city of Los Angeles.

Today, Cooper, a shareholder with the law firm **Klinedinst PC** and chair of its environmental law group, leaves her downtown law office and finds solace at her ranch home in Alpine surrounded by horses, chickens, goats, cats and dogs.

"I think it goes back to how I grew up," Cooper said. "I love the atmosphere of the small-town feel where everybody knows everybody else and my kids can run around outdoors barefoot. I go home to a real quiet setting, which is a real dichotomy from the hustle and bustle of downtown and the high-rise buildings."

Born in Weston, Connecticut, to a father who was a police officer and a mother who worked as a police dispatcher, she grew up surrounded by mountains and lush green meadows.

She was excited about studying communications at Cal State Northridge and knew what would be next.

"I decided on graduating that I would like to go to law school," Cooper said.

Pregnant with her first child, Shauna, one of three daughters, Cooper felt she had even more reason to pursue a law degree. Her then husband helped pay the bills.

In 1993, Cooper landed a scholarship from Washington & Lee University School of Law, so the young family moved to Lexington, Virginia.

During that time, Cooper met **John Klinedinst**, CEO of Klinedinst, who is also an alumnus of Washington & Lee.

Klinedinst offered Cooper an internship at the San Diego practice and then her first job.

"I started in 1997 as a first-year associate and never left," Cooper said. "San Diego is very easy to get used to."

Cooper, who worked herself up the ranks at Klinedinst to shareholder, represents various clients in environmental, business, real estate and professional liability litigation. Her current practice focuses on the defense of environmental professionals in litigation and at trial.

Among her clients are moving company **U-Haul**, clean-up company **Servpro's** franchises, and utilities company **Energy Liberty Corp.**

Cooper said that while she often puts in long workdays, she makes time to volunteer at her two younger daughters' school and writes for multiple law publications.

On the weekends, she enjoys nothing more than spending time outdoors with daughters Kristen, 12, and Erica, 9.

"We ride horses or go to the beach," Cooper said.

She feels that her animals and children help her keep life in perspective.

"We so often deal with grave circumstances at work," she said. "Everybody needs to play, even when you're a grown-up. I look at my children and my animals, and this really helps me maintain perspective."

