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**SOFIA ADROGUÉ, P.C.**  
Practicing law with  
passion & panache



# Practicing law with passion and panache

by Ann Reisfeld Boutté

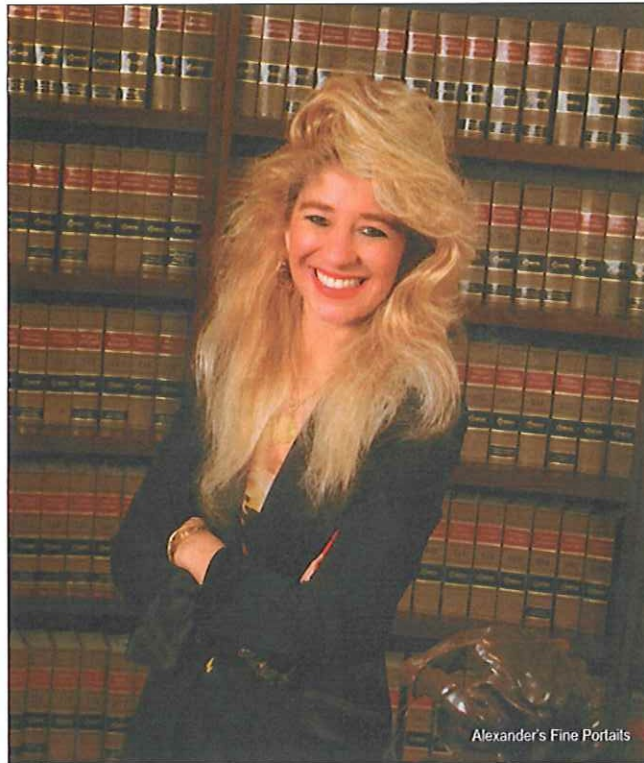
If asked for advice by young women who aspire to professional careers, attorney Sofia Adrogué summons alliteration.

"Find your passion," she says. "Then pursue it with preparation, perspiration, persistence and panache."

Or, as anyone acquainted with the 40-year-old attorney, community leader, wife and mother of three might suggest, learn from her example.

The walls of her office at Looper Reed & McGraw, P.C. ([www.lrmLaw.com](http://www.lrmLaw.com)) are lined with professional and civic honors she has been given. Among them are the Outstanding American Award from the U.S. Jaycees and the Barbara Jordan Legacy Award from the National Council of Negro Women. She has been cited as a 2005 Woman of Distinction by ABC Channel 13 and one of the top 20 Elite Women of 2007 by *Hispanic Business* magazine. The City of Houston proclaimed July 10, 2004 as Sofia Adrogué Day. And that is just a small sample of the accolades she has accumulated in her 15-year career.

Drawn to the legal profession by her love of language and writing, and an interest in working directly with people, Adrogué specializes in the male-dominated area of business law. A Member (Partner) of Looper Reed & McGraw, P.C., a full service law firm with approximately 70 lawyers in Houston, Dallas and Tyler, Adrogué handles complex commercial litigation and consultation, as well as multi-party proceedings in state and federal courts throughout the United States and abroad. Her clients come from all industries and range from a single entrepreneur in rural Texas to a multinational conglomerate with diversified world-wide business holdings. Throughout her career, her caseload has



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included at least one multi-party matter with millions at issue from business disputes among oil companies and litigation exceeding \$300 million in damages to litigation involving thousands of claimants in a highly controversial asbestos matter.

"Regardless of a business organization's size, matters related to its transactions and resulting agreements are often complex," says Adrogué. "It is this complexity I find so interesting, because of the challenges presented by finding creative and imaginative resolutions to these matters. However, because these are

ultimately business matters, you also have to assess them from a more pragmatic point of view, realizing that some alternative resolution to the matter might be most beneficial to the client from a business perspective."

Adrogué's perpetual interest in learning combined with a desire to add to her arsenal of skills prompted her to enroll in the Harvard Business School Owner/President Management Program. Since 2006, she spends one month a year at the campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts taking courses such as accounting and control, information technology and innovation,

leadership and organizational effectiveness, negotiation and decision-making strategies, a curriculum comparable to that of an Executive MBA. Along with a class of mostly business entrepreneurs, Adrogué will graduate in 2008 and become an alumna of the Harvard Business School.

In the past decade, Adrogué has also developed a "niche" practice in the health care arena. In 2003, the Texas Legislature passed tort reform that led to a sharp rise in medical board investigations and disciplinary decisions.

Adrogué's involvement began when a prominent surgeon asked her to represent him in a matter within a hospital system. Although she explained that it was not her area of expertise, he insisted.

"The representation concluded very successfully" she says.

Complementing her business consulting and litigation efforts, she now also represents health care professionals in peer review and Texas Medical Board proceedings.

Unlike business litigation, it's not "paper intensive" involving hundreds of boxes of documents. "But it's just as intellectually satisfying," she says. "Whether it's a professional reputation or a business, there's a lot at stake."

Despite her demanding caseload, Adrogué is a prolific writer of legal journal articles. Since 1997, she has published more than 60, an output usually associated only with full-time academicians. For more than 10 years, her articles on business torts have appeared quarterly in the *Fifth Circuit Reporter*, a publication sent to more than 5,000 attorneys in 34 states. Other articles have appeared in publications such as the *ABA Business Torts Journal*, *The Houston Law Review*, *The Houston Lawyer*, *The Review of*

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Litigation, *The Texas Lawyer* and *The Trial Diplomacy Journal*.

"I think it's only by keeping up with the jurisprudence and understanding the trends that you're better able to serve your clients," she says.

Because of her legal writing and reputation, Adrogué is frequently invited to speak in public forums. She has addressed more than 100 groups and organizations, including those associated Continuing Legal Education Conferences, the State Bar of Texas, the Houston Bar Association, the University of Houston Law Center and the University of Texas School of Law. Other engagements include speeches before the American Trial Lawyers Association, Georgetown Law Center in Washington, D.C., and the Hispanic National Bar Association.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Adrogué immigrated to the United States in 1975 with her father, Horacio J., a physician, her mother, Sara, a homemaker, and her four siblings. Fueled by a desire to practice academic medicine in America, Dr. Adrogué had won a research grant to work at Tufts University. The Adrogués arrived at Logan Airport with 14 suitcases tagged with red ribbons, planning to live in Boston for one year. But, Dr. Adrogué was so impressed with the opportunities America offered him and his children, he opted to stay. He accepted a position as a Professor at Baylor College of Medicine, where he has been for almost 30 years. Of the Adrogué offspring, three are lawyers (Sofia, Matías and Marcos) and two (Horacio E. and Soledad) are doctors.

Raised in southwest Houston, Sofia Adrogué graduated from St. Agnes Academy *summa cum laude*. She won a Board of Governors' Scholarship to Rice University and graduated *magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa. She attended the University of Houston Law Center, also on full competitive scholarship, and graduated *magna cum laude*, Order of the Coif and Barons.

Adrogué professes a passion for Houston.

"It's an egalitarian city," she



*Women of Looper Reed & McGraw, P.C.*

*The women attorneys at Looper Reed & McGraw are an impressive group of legal professionals. Pictured (from left) are Melissa Carter, Michelle Sandner, Elizabeth Ardanowski, Sofia Adrogué, Susan McLerran, Kate McConnico, Terry Thomson, Gabrielle Kickham and Ellie Parsa. Photo by Alexander's Fine Portraits*

says. "If you are willing to give it your heart and soul, it will welcome you with open arms."

In the interest of "giving back" to her adopted hometown, Adrogué has indeed committed her heart and soul to community service, particularly in the areas of education, leadership and women's issues. She has co-chaired, among many others, the

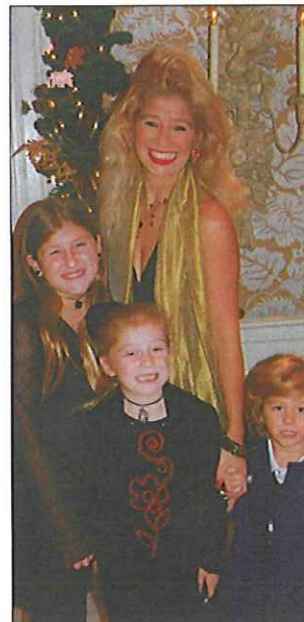
*"I believe you are a more effective advocate, a more effective professional, and a more effective human being if you give back along the way."*

Girls Incorporated of Greater Houston Annual Gala and the Honorable John R. Brown Scholarship Foundation Inaugural Luncheon.

Sofia serves or has served on the Board of Directors of the American Leadership Forum Houston/Gulf Coast Chapter (Board Member and Chair of Selection Committee), the Chinquapin School (Advisory Board), CHRISTUS Health Gulf Coast, Girls Incorporated of Greater Houston (Advisory Board Member, former President and Board Chair), the Houston Law Review Alumni Association

(former President), Memorial Hermann Foundation, RICE-TMS, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Theatre Under The Stars and the United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast.

She conceived and created the Latin American Arts Gala for the Museum of Fine Arts Houston as a way to generate funds to acquire and showcase Latin American Art. In February 2005, the Gala, now an annual event, sold out before the invitations were mailed and raised more than \$700,000. As an advisor to this year's Gala, the MFAH raised \$1,000,000. Indicative of her passion for Houston, Adrogué also co-



*Sofia Adrogué with her children: Sloane, Schuyler and Stefan Gustafson*

chaired the Houston Downtown Alliance's Heart of the City Gala and the Leadership Houston Gala, other sold-out evenings.

In conjunction with The Honorable Caroline Baker, Adrogué co-founded the Leadership Forum for Houston's Youth held at the James A. Baker III Institute at Rice University. A collaboration among Girls Inc. of Greater Houston, Leadership Houston, and Neighborhood Centers Inc., the one-day annual event, now in its sixth year, introduces hundreds of high school students to business and community leaders.

Adrogué says, "I believe you are a more effective advocate, a more effective professional, and a more effective human being if you give back along the way."

Indeed, she continues to do so. Adrogué is the keynote speaker this month for The Women's Resource of Greater Houston's 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration Luncheon. Her presentation is quite appropriately entitled, "Caffeinated & Oxygenated."

For 15 years, Adrogué has been married to Sten Gustafson, an energy investment banker and Managing Director at UBS, whom she met at Rice when they were undergraduates. They have two daughters, Sloane, 11, and Schuyler, 7, and a son, Stefan, 4. Together, the couple tries to instill in their children their "focus on education, labor, faith, humility, and integrity."

Clearly, Adrogué pursues her triad of passions — career, community service and family, — with preparation, perspiration and persistence. As for panache, the last ingredient in her recipe for success, she has it in ample supply — from her mane of blonde hair, to her trademark red lipstick ("the purest red I can find"), her predilection for wearing black and her contagious, throaty laugh.

Her demanding, non-stop schedule ("six hours of sleep is a great night") is part of her life plan.

"Happiness is not an accident," she says. "Nor is it something you wish for. Happiness is something you design.

"At the end, I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work, the more I live."

*Ann Reisfeld Boutté is a free-lance journalist living in Houston.*