

## Riding The Path Of Life

By BETSY DEMITROPOULOS



**Mari Leigh poses on a motorcycle. Riding is one of her many hobbies. (Photo by Dave Shields)**

There are a lot of women who “do it all,” and Mari Henry Leigh is certainly one of them. And she’s doing it with great success.

Leigh says it’s possible to “do it all” — just not all at once.

“Life is a marathon, and you need to pace yourself,” she says.

Leigh, of Buffalo Grove, says balancing family, work, hobbies and the like is a delicate art. She doesn’t sweat the small stuff, and that seems to be working for her.

Leigh is a leading female attorney in Illinois, a devoted mother to three sons and a woman with many interests, including motorcycle riding.

### **Mari The Lawyer**

Leigh is a nationally recognized attorney and one of Illinois’ leading women lawyers, having been voted by her peers to Illinois’ top 100 female attorneys in 2009. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Purdue University in 1980 and her jurist doctorate from Case Western Reserve University in 1983.

She maintains an active civil litigation and consulting practice in the Chicago law firm of Meckler Bulger Tilson Marick & Pearson LLP, where she chairs a 13-member practice group — The Legal Audit Group — concentrating on multimillion-dollar attorney fee disputes.

Leigh also writes and speaks frequently on topics within her practice areas and dedicates a substantial portion of her time training and mentoring young women in the profession. Each year, she hosts the Women’s Forum at the annual conference of the Council on Litigation Management, where she serves as an advisory board member.

One of Leigh’s older brothers was an attorney, and he influenced her decision to become a lawyer. “I idolized (my brother),” she says. “I wanted a career that would challenge me and stimulate me mentally.”

Leigh learned her strong work ethic from her mother, Marietta. If Leigh wanted something, she knew she would have to work hard for it.

And what happened when Leigh wanted some new clothes?

“My mother told me to go to the dry goods store, buy some fabric and make it (myself),” she says. And that she did. In high school, Leigh says, she made all of her own clothing. Her mother was a master seamstress and taught her only daughter a thing or two.

### **Mari The Mother**

Despite her successes at the office and in the courtroom, Leigh considers her three sons to be her greatest accomplishments in life.

“I think my sons are extremely talented,” she says. “They have their father’s brains and my focus. Watching them venture out into the world on their own has been an amazing experience, to which little else can compare.”

Her oldest son, Garrett, 24, is a financial analyst with an investment banking firm in Chicago. Devin, 22, is an actor and an honors student at DePaul University, and Mason, 18, is a college-bound senior at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire. Leigh considers her nephew, Ethan, 22, one of her sons, too. He lived with the Leigh family for many years.

Although her career as an attorney was demanding at times, Leigh always made her sons her top priority. She constantly did things to make them feel treasured and cherished.

“On their birthdays, I never worked,” she says. “I was 100 percent theirs that day.” And when her sons turned 12 years old, she took each of them on a special four-day “mom-and-me” trip to New York.

### **Mari The Motorcycle Rider**

When not working or spending time with her sons, Leigh enjoys landscaping, cooking, refinishing furniture and photography.

She also loves motorcycle riding. She enjoys riding her Harley, a 2010 Dyna Super Glide, as a way to relax, meet people and view the countryside.

Where is Leigh's favorite place in the world?

"Any breakfast diner on Main Street USA," she says.

Her favorite ride is the "breakfast run," a short scenic ride to a local breakfast diner to enjoy good food and great company.

"When I am out on the road with others, it's the time I feel most relaxed and most alive," she says.

Since Leigh took up riding, two of her sons also have obtained their M license, and they plan to join their mother and her two brothers, both Harley riders, on weekend road trips this summer.

Lake Shore Harley-Davidson in Libertyville, where Leigh bought her Harley, helped her make her dream bike.

"Every success I have ever achieved in life has come with the support of others," she says. "Life is a team sport, and Lake Shore Harley-Davidson has been like my pit crew."

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

About 12 percent of U.S. retail motorcycle sales of new Harley-Davidson motorcycles are to female buyers.

#### **Women Behind The Bars**

Harley-Davidson wants to recognize and celebrate women who have taken life by the bars. On May 14, women riders from around the world will hit the road together with the goal of bringing attention to women in motorcycling.

And don't forget to join Harley-Davidson May 8 in the Y-Me Race At Your Pace to fight breast cancer. It's a 1-mile or 3-mile walk or 5K run in Chicago.

Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/4eueamu>.