

Shelley Thompson

Young Professional of the Year Award Finalist

Shelley Thompson is someone who believes that women do not have to choose between having a career and having a family. They can do both.

Originally from Denver, after practicing law for several years in New York, Shelley landed a job in a Denver law firm, where she was told that she had to make a choice—mom or attorney, but not both. She courageously left the firm to start her own independent practice.



The proud mom of a two-year boy now handles complex business disputes and litigation, and heads up the Trusts & Estates and Business Succession department at the Denver firm of Allen & Vellone P.C. In addition to business litigation, Shelley does complex estate planning for high-net-worth families, families with small to mid-size estates, and non-traditional families. Shelley also assists clients with contracts, company formation, entity choice, buy-sell agreements, operating agreements, and prenuptial agreements.

Shelley’s professional focus is on her clients’ unique needs and concerns. “Anyone who knows Shelley, is in good hands, whether as a friend and confidant, or as a client, soliciting legal counsel,” said Pam Gates Belanger. “She adapts well to any situation with which she is confronted. She is not one to give up when a situation looks impossible, and does not yield to adversity.”

Shelley’s prior experience includes several years of complex litigation in New York, New York. She has performed *pro bono* litigation and volunteer work on behalf of foreign-born U.S. residents, achieving changes to New York law. She spent over 2,000 *pro bono* hours working for women in Queens to help them gain control over their homes after a crooked former manager illegally siphoned money from the residents’ common charges.

She has performed a wide variety of other community work, including *pro bono* work for people in need in Denver. She has continued to do free legal work for several low-income people locally.

Born into a low-income family affected by mental illness, alcoholism and abuse, Shelley overcame many obstacles to get to where she is now. Financially independent since age 14, she became the first in her family to go to college and subsequently graduate school. Shelley received her *Bachelors of Arts* in Political Science from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1996 and her *Juris Doctor* and *Masters of Arts* in International Affairs from American University in Washington D.C. in 2001.

This winter, Shelley will also begin teaching a course at University of Denver's School of International Studies. Shelley's publications include: Thompson, S., *Globalization of the Securities Markets: Effects on Investor Protection*, ABA Journal, *International Lawyer*, Winter 2007-2008, 41 INTLLAW 1121.

In addition to her *pro bono* service, Shelley has counseled a number of women on exploring new options for work or finding work.

"Shelley possesses natural leadership qualities and is someone who mentors up-and-coming businesswomen to give them a hand up, rather than a 'knock them off (the proverbial corporate) ladder!'" said Berith Jacobson, TEAM 2000, TEAM Think, Colorado Golf Trails & EWGA of Denver.