

## ◀ FIRMS

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# Down to Business

**The Counts Law Firm helps clients with a wide range of entrepreneurial challenges.**



*From left: Dina Adham and Emahn Counts on March 14. Justin L. Stewart / Daily Journal*

Pasadena litigator Emahn Counts studied entrepreneurship as an undergraduate, and his passion for owning his own business dates all the way back to elementary school.

“I enjoy the business side of running a small firm just as much, actually, as I enjoy practicing law, and I think that’s probably not a common feeling for lawyers,” Counts said. “There’s a certain element of excitement to me in starting a business, in marketing a business and meeting regularly with new clients — or potential new clients. That in itself is rewarding to me, and it’s exciting to me.”

Counts grew up in Los Angeles, where he often spent days as a young child with his entrepreneurial grandmother.

“She was a registered nurse and a group homeowner and a real estate agent,” Counts explained, noting that his grandmother is now in her 90s. “And I used to go to work with her to all her different jobs, seeing what she did — even as a 4-year-old and 5-year-old. ... She was very successful as a businessperson, and she was a big mentor for me.”

After completing his undergraduate degree at Loyola Marymount University, Counts enrolled at Loyola Law School, where he graduated in 2003, and he said pursuing a legal career was another goal he settled on early.

“I looked back at my college application that I wrote when I was graduating from high school, and in there I said I wanted to be a business attorney,” he said. “Law was a natural fit for me. It’s just the way my brain works. I’m a person that advocates. ... I just think it’s a natural fit for my personality.”

Counts passed the bar in 2004, and he worked for other firms, where he was especially drawn to business and real estate litigation. By the end of 2009, however, he was ready to strike out on his own and launched the Counts Law Firm, which today handles a busy mix of business, real estate and family law litigation.

“Family law litigation — that area I learned, fortunately or unfortunately, through personal experience. I’m familiar with family courts,” Counts said with a rueful chuckle. “And I just had so many clients that were business and real estate clients that also ended up needing family law help. I didn’t advertise it for a long time, but eventually, I finally did, and we do probably an equal share of business, real estate and family law cases today.”

Attorney Dina A. Adham started working with Counts at the firm in the spring of 2018, and she described him as an attorney who examines cases with an exhaustive, in-depth approach.

“He’s a stickler for detail,” Adham said. “And he’s agile. ... One week, it’s a family law issue, and the next week it’s an unlawful detainer, and then you’re going to deal with a contract dispute. He digests it all really quickly and is able to maneuver in all these various areas very effectively for clients.”

Adham grew up in the San Fernando Valley and went to Boston College Law School, where she graduated in 1999. After passing the bar, she worked for a Los Angeles small firm and then spent three years at Paul Hastings LLP before taking a break in 2008 to focus on raising her children.

Like Counts, Adham has always been drawn to business litigation.

“As dry as it sounds, I love contract disputes,” she explained with a chuckle. “I think contracts are meant to manage expectations, and a really well-written contract does that.”

Adham noted that she often works with clients who wanted to save money and decided to use a contract they found through an online legal service instead of engaging an experienced attorney.

“In their minds, this piece of paper they found online reflects their expectations,” Adham said. “What you discover very quickly is that it doesn’t. And you end up — as a litigator — coming in to not only explain to your client how this piece of paper does not reflect what they think the deal was, but how it might, in fact, say the opposite, and then trying to figure out how to undo it.”

Counts also noted that he is particularly proud to be at the helm of an African-American owned firm in Los Angeles County.

“African Americans are probably less than 5% of the lawyers in LA,” he said. According to the last census, 9% of county residents are Black. “So it’s really important to me to connect to the Black community in LA. ... I definitely advertise as a Black-owned business and a Black-owned law firm. It’s really important to me for people to feel that they can have representation that relates to them and connects with them and they feel comfortable with.”

Los Angeles trust and probate litigator Keith J. Moten has worked with Counts to assist shared clients over the years, and like Adham, Moten was quick to mention Counts’ impressive attention to detail.

“He’s very precise in the way that he deals with the law and in the way that he deals with his clients,” Moten said. “And he’s very precise in a good way – not in an impersonal way. ... There’s really nothing that gets by him, and he really does pay attention to all of the little details that pop up in life and litigation, and I think that’s what makes him an especially great attorney.”

Moten added that while handling cases for many clients over the years who have also worked with Counts on separate disputes, he’s never heard any disparaging comments.

“When they have a bad experience with attorneys, people are pretty eager to tell you how bad their experience was,” Moten said with a laugh. “And I’ve just never come across that with Emahn. ... I think the proof’s in the pudding: He’s just really good with clients.”

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