

CENTRAL FLORIDA EDITION | PREMIERE 2011

# ATTORNEY AT LAW

MAGAZINE®



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— **Attorney of the Month**

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— **Law Firm of the Month**

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— **Practice Area Profile**

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— **Judicial Profile**

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— **James Sell**

## Rebecca Palmer

Partner, Lowndes, Drosdick, Doster, Kantor & Reed, P.A.

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# HARRIS, & SHARMA



## Prineet Sharma Harris Harris Bauerle Sharma

By Paula Hubbs Cohen

**H**ighly respected and recommended by clients and adversaries alike, Prineet Sharma enjoys a well-deserved reputation as one of the top eminent domain lawyers in Orlando. In fact, just in the past three years, he has obtained more than \$100 million for his property owner clients, an amount that continues to grow exponentially as his practice continues its upward trajectory. In addition to property owners, this accomplished eminent domain trial lawyer also serves as lead eminent domain counsel for Florida's largest natural gas pipeline and has been recommended by taking authorities who have been impressed with his skills and prowess at eminent domain negotiation.

### Ethical Pillars

Building his reputation on what he refers to as “the twin ethical pillars of standing up for what’s right and doing the right thing no matter how difficult or unpopular,” this “humble Gator fan” graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in Finance and a minor in Economics. While attending college, he was selected to be in Florida Blue Key and served as president of Kappa Alpha Order, one of the university’s traditional ‘southern gentlemen’ fraternities. “That’s where I met my current law

partner, Stumpy Harris,” recalls Sharma. “He was the alumni advisor for our fraternity and we became really good friends. He thought I had the makings of being a good lawyer, so after graduating, I attended Stetson College of Law.”

Armed with his J.D., Sharma served as Assistant County Attorney in Hillsborough County for several years, then Harris offered him a job opening up an office of his law firm in Tampa. “Although I didn’t know much about eminent domain at the time, I really respected him and thought it would be a great opportunity, so I jumped at the chance,” says Sharma. “What was interesting was that it didn’t take long for me to realize that eminent domain is where my skill-sets and legal talents could be used to extraordinary advantage. All my life, I’ve been attracted to situations where I can offer leadership and bring different parties with different viewpoints and backgrounds to the same table to iron out their differences, figure out solutions and reach an agreement that works for everyone. And that’s pretty much the definition of a successful eminent domain lawyer.”

### Team Quarterback

Using a team-building approach to assessing situations and finding solutions has been extremely successful for Sharma.

Indeed, he likens his role as being a quarterback – being fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of both teams and knowing how and when to drive his team to a win. “I have what I believe to be a unique advantage in that I have represented both property owners and taking authorities so I thoroughly understand the needs and goals of both sides of an eminent domain transaction,” says Sharma. “This experience is of great value to my clients and I take that experience and put it to work for my clients to get successful results.”

Sharma says that understanding a client’s needs is his top priority. “Many people don’t want an eminent domain project to happen, but once it becomes inevitable, they need to understand all their options,” he says. “For me, it’s critical that I understand what that property means to them, not just financially, but also personally. Oftentimes, it might be a parcel of land or a business that’s been in a family for generations and there can be a lot of emotional ties that are hard to put a price-tag on. That’s another area where my experience can be of great benefit to them.”

### Highest Possible Value

Sharma is adamant about delivering the highest possible value to his clients. “But more than that, my job is to stand up for people and their rights,” he says, adding that the fictional lawyer, Atticus Finch of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, was one of his early role models. “That was his whole goal – to stand up for people even when it was difficult and even dangerous to do so. There’s something kind of noble about that that I identify with and I’ve modeled my career on those concepts and beliefs.”

Beyond the courtroom, Sharma has written numerous articles about eminent domain in national publications and has chaired the Florida Statewide Super Conference on Eminent Domain.



## At a Glance

### Contact

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### Education

University of Florida, B.S., 1994  
Stetson College of Law, J.D., 1998

### Bar Admissions

Florida  
United States District Court, Middle District of Florida  
United States District Court, Southern District of Florida  
United States District Court, Northern District of Florida

### Honors and Recognition

AV® Peer Review Rated, Martindale-Hubbell  
Best Lawyers in America®, U.S. News, Eminent Domain  
& Condemnation Law, 2011  
Super Lawyers, Rising Star 2009, 2010, 2011  
Orlando Business Journal, Best of the Bar  
Orlando’s Best Lawyers, Orlando Magazine 2011  
Orlando’s Top Lawyers, Orlando Home &  
Leisure Magazine 2010

### Professional and Civic Affiliations

Florida Bar Eminent Domain Committee, Member  
Trial Lawyers American Bar Association, Member  
Association of Eminent Domain Professionals, Member  
University of Florida Alumni Association, Member  
Gator Boosters, Board of Directors

### Personal

Married to Shamila, who is also an attorney  
Daughter Asha is 16 months old

In addition, he has been appointed to serve on the Florida Bar Eminent Domain Committee and is a member of the Association of Eminent Domain Professionals.

### The Bottom Line

“Regardless if it’s a \$10,000 case or a \$10 million case, I approach each the same way with the same goal in mind: to obtain the most favorable result for my client in an honest, expeditious and effective manner,” he says. “It doesn’t do me or my client any good to sit on a case for a year. I’m very good at identifying what needs to be done and getting it done to completion as efficiently and quickly as possible.”