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## Monroe lawyer authors book to calm fears surrounding divorce

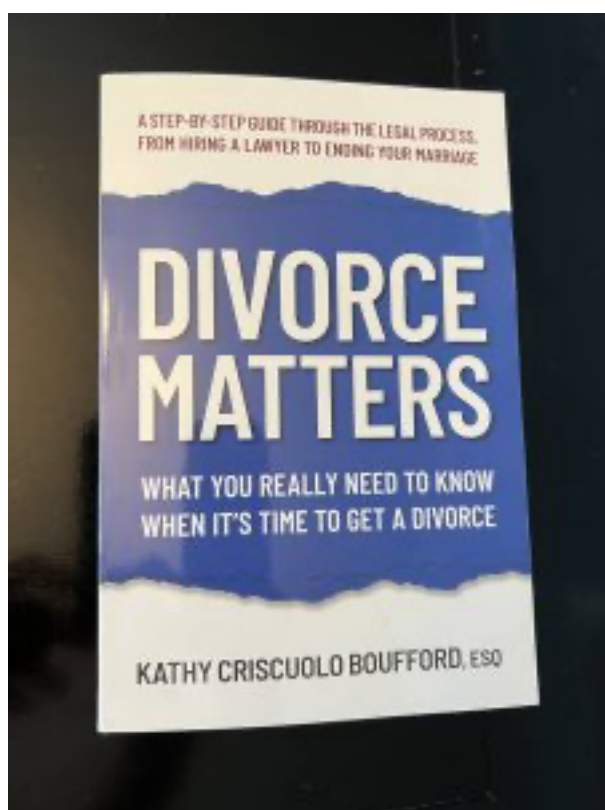
by [Bill Bittar](#)  
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Kathy Criscuolo Boufford, Esq., of the Monroe law firm of Bellenot & Boufford, has been a divorce lawyer for nearly 30 years, helping clients navigate through some of the toughest times of their lives, while overcoming common fears — from custody of their children and housing rights to the unknowns of starting over again.

Boufford provides free phone consultations for callers and has received positive feedback about her writing from those who've read her articles, and while sharing some of her expertise during speaking engagements, inevitably, an audience member will ask if she has a book.

“People kept saying, ‘you should write a book,’” Boufford said during a recent interview at her Monroe law office. “They said that forever and I said, ‘no, I don’t have a book,’ and it wasn’t even something I was thinking of.”



Boufford also received encouragement from her friend, Beth Stoller, a public speaking coach and founder and director of At the Podium LLC, who told Boufford writing a book would help her at speaking engagements.

One day Boufford decided to take a look at the articles she had written over the years, which include the most common questions and fears she has heard from clients, and put the articles into categories. Before she knew it, Boufford was on her way to writing her first book.

“Divorce Matters: What You Really Need to Know When it’s Time to Get a Divorce” was recently published by [Square One Publishers](#). It is a “step-by-step guide through the legal process, from hiring a lawyer to ending your marriage,” according to the cover.

Rather than being a “how to” book, Boufford said it is meant to give readers a base knowledge of the steps in a divorce, whether it is a contested court case or negotiating a peaceful settlement.

“I am not a proponent of divorce,” Boufford wrote in the introduction of her book. “In fact, I think all efforts should be made to save a marriage. I do realize, however, that despite people’s best efforts, some marriages cannot, or should not, remain intact. I understand that some marriages are unhealthy or even dangerous.”

Once one arrives at the decision on their own, or their partner files for divorce, Boufford said it’s her job to give her client the information needed to see it through successfully.

“Knowledge is power,” Boufford wrote, “and with this power comes the confidence to move forward and make the best out of a bad situation. Divorce is a heavy burden, but knowing what you can expect to face during the process will make it seem lighter.”

By gaining this base knowledge before taking action, Boufford said people can do things right the first time, rather than going through the costly effort of winding back a bad decision.

### **Hiring an editor**



Attorney Kathy Boufford, right, wrote her book while handling her regular caseload at the law firm of Bellenot & Boufford.

After putting articles into categories that could be chapters, Boufford found holes she had to fill in with more writing. She initially considered the self-publishing route and decided to hire a book editor to help her transform her writing into book form.

After some fruitless searches online, Boufford decided to use BNI’s search engine, put in “book editor” and found Christine Thom of [Stardust Editorial](#) in the Greater Chicago Area. They spoke remotely over Zoom at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I instantly felt comfortable with her,” Boufford said. “She was a legit editor. It wasn’t a side gig. She helped me get to the point where I thought I had a finished product.”

The women worked together for about a year.

“She said, ‘I think the book is unique enough and your writing is approachable, so you have a really good shot to be published,’” Boufford said. “She liked the way I wrote. She said, ‘your personality shines through in your writing.’”

Thom gave Boufford a quick tutorial on publishers and how to pitch a book idea. Boufford applied to 10 or 11 publishers specializing in the nonfiction/self help categories.

### **Starting from Square One**



Boufford was working on a case at Milford Courthouse on the Friday before Memorial Day in 2022, when she heard from Rudy Shur, CEO of Square One Publishers of Garden City, N.Y.

“I was in the hallway during a break and my cellphone rang,” Boufford said. “I was like, ‘who is this?’ He was from New York. I almost hung up on him and said, ‘sorry, I have no clients in New York.’”

Then Boufford heard the word “publishing” and everything clicked.

“I said, ‘I’m so happy you’re calling, but as soon as the marshal comes out, I have to go back into the courtroom,’” she recalled.

Shur said he was interested in her query and would be in contact with her soon.

“I was shaking. I hung up and I immediately had to forget about Rudy and go back into the courtroom,” Boufford said. “I went into my car at the end of the day and looked at my phone. Sure enough, the number was on the phone. I called my husband and said, ‘you’ll never guess what call I got.’”

Boufford’s husband assumed it was something work related and fretted over it ruining their holiday weekend, but then was pleasantly surprised to hear the good news about her book.

The couple spent the weekend at Boufford’s parents’ place on Milford Beach. Boufford said relatives peppered her with questions about her book, but she didn’t have much to tell, because she wasn’t going to talk to Shur until after the weekend.

The ensuing conversations with Shur helped Boufford flesh out her book.

“He said, ‘you don’t have a book. You have a pamphlet,’” she recalled.

Shur told Boufford how to write an intro and a forward and covered her rough drafts with red marks, until it was good enough for the final versions.

After staying in regular contact from June through mid-July, Shur told Boufford he wanted the book to go national and offered her a contract.

“He said, ‘at this time I’d like to offer you a contract if you’re willing.’ *If I’m willing?*” Boufford recalled with a chuckle, joking that she would have signed a napkin at that point.

She wrote an email telling Shur she would consider his offer.

Then Boufford said she buckled down and wrote five to eight hours every weekend and spent two hours a day writing during the work week, for at least three days a week.

Shur told her she would see a lot of red edits early in the process as he served as the book’s content editor.

“We merged chapters. What I thought was the first chapter ended up being chapter two,” Boufford said, adding there was a lot of the give and take between her and Shur.

Boufford said Shur told her she uses a lot of “highfalutin words” and encouraged her to write more in layman’s terms, rather than the legalese of lawyers she was used to.

“I would hear Rudy in my head,” Boufford said of her writing, adding it led to fewer crossed out words and red marks, making the editing easier for Shur as they went along.

Boufford said she thought she and Shur were just having conversations in June and July, but the content editor was thinking of a direction for the book all along.

In some cases, information Shur thought should be included didn't fit nicely into the book, so they used an "inset", a box highlighting the information on its own, while separating it from the flow of the chapter.

Though Shur didn't want a "pamphlet" Boufford stressed that it shouldn't be too long either, because the readers would be under stress and not have time for a long narrative. The book ultimately came to 162 pages.

The original deadline for the book was January of 2023, but Boufford said she was so busy with her regular workload that she didn't finish it until Thanksgiving of 2023.

"I said, 'Rudy, I thought you were going to fire me,'" Boufford said. "He said, 'I know you were working every week and doing your job.'"

### **The gold standard**



Kathy Boufford is finally allowing herself to enjoy having her own published book.

After the final draft of "Divorce Matters" was finished, Shur assigned it to a fine editor to make any last corrections. There were preorders to get reviews. Square One also made a sales sheet and sent it to distributors.

One day Boufford Googled her name to call up the Bellenot & Boufford website and was surprised when Barnes & Noble came up.

"Rudy said, 'Kathy, we have to start marketing,'" Boufford recalled. "I have a marketing and PR person. I thought I had to do the marketing on my own."

When Boufford told Thom everything that's happened with Square One, Thom commented on all of the attention Boufford has been receiving, telling her, "you have no idea how lucky you are. You have the gold standard. This is what people die for."



“I thought Rudy was spending so much time with me because I was a dumbass,” Boufford joked.

The marketing professional talked to Boufford about an audiobook and a friend said they can do a library crawl together to promote her book.

Last Friday, Boufford found a box on her doorstep and assumed it was from Amazon. “I saw Square One on the label and my husband opened it for me,” she said of receiving her first copy of the softcover book.

Boufford expressed her gratitude to clients who shared their experiences with her over the years and to those who encouraged her to write a book.

“This is not the product of Kathy Boufford,” she said. “Even though my name is on the book, it’s really the result of everybody else giving me the encouragement and the reasons to write. I’m still shaking my head in wonder, thinking, ‘how did I get here?’ Now, I’m finally starting to enjoy it a bit.”

Now Boufford happily shares advice with friends who’ve told her they’ve always wanted to write a book, and has helped people make connections, including Thom and Shur.

Attorney Ronald Bellenot has been practicing law with Boufford since the 90s.

“It doesn’t surprise me at all,” Bellenot said of his law partner becoming a published author. “When she sets her mind on something, it’s impossible to stop her.”

To purchase a copy of “Divorce Matters” [click here](#).

*All respectful comments with the commenter’s first and last name are welcome.*