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Stacy D. Phillips leaves little doubt about her place on the competitive stage of Los Angeles matrimonial law: part of her email handle incorporates the phrase “dissoqueen.”

“It’s a cutthroat world,” she said. “I love a good fight in court, but I hate squabbles between lawyers when I’m trying to save families. What I do is really hard.”

Phillips puts her philosophy of parting ways on display in the title of her book, “Divorce: It’s All About Control; How to Win the Emotional, Psychological and Legal Wars.” The cover of the 2005 volume, now in its seventh printing, shows a couple tussling over a wedding ring inscribed, “Till Death Do Us Part.”

“The book summarizes how I approach clients,” she said. “People have misquoted the title against me, but I’m talking about how somebody going through a divorce can over-control and drink too much or work out too much. I partner with and



educate clients but I don’t tell them what to do. I’m assertive and opinionated, but clients have to arrive at their own decisions themselves.”

Phillips was a name partner and managing partner of her own firms for 26 years before moving herself and many of her colleagues to launch Blank Rome LLP’s Los Angeles matrimonial and family law practice in 2016. “I decided I was tired of day-to-day management. Policy is my strength,” she said. “Besides, I was worried about cybersecurity and my lease was coming due. Still, it was hard. My partners and I at our old

firm experienced what is meant by the Yiddish expression ‘haimish,’ a homelike atmosphere.”

When Phillips goes to bat for a client, she’s all in. She fought hard for one Los Angeles businessman involved in complicated real estate and tax deals that made supporting his ex-wife difficult, though he was managing, Phillips said. Then the ex-wife demanded immediate full spousal support payments and an immediate property division, plus assumption of the full tax burden by Phillips’ client.

The wife has since died and the case has moved to probate court.

Phillips said she’s

noticed four trends in the pandemic era. There’s an increase in domestic violence claims due to the cooped-up effect. There’s an uptick in people challenging valid prenups to try to gain an unethical advantage in divorce settlements. COVID-19’s negative effect on the real estate market at first led to some devalued settlements, though that issue has improved recently. And cases aren’t settling the way they once did.

“People can’t control a world that’s out of control, so they try to control their divorce,” Phillips said.

—JOHN ROEMER