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2011 BEST ADVISORS

**Sandra M. Gumerove, Esq. of
The Law Offices of Sandra M. Gumerove, Esq.**

Lifetime Achievement Award, Attorney

When Sandra M. Gumerove's first child, Lauren, was born in 1981, she was diagnosed with Sturge-Weber syndrome, which causes developmental disabilities, seizures, blindness, and learning disabilities. Previously solely a corporate lawyer, Gumerove refocused her legal practice in 1990 and devoted herself specifically to special needs law, striving towards helping disabled individuals and their families. "For me, I live it," says Gumerove. "Not just because it's my career, but it's very personal to me because I need to make sure my daughter's taken care of."

Gumerove often works with other attorneys, including divorce attorneys, personal injury lawyers, and trust and estate lawyers, in cases involving individuals with special needs and their families. Her counsel is also sought by those not in the legal field, including accountants, financial planners, physicians, and insurance agents, among others.

Aside from her legal work, Gumerove is very involved with advocacy for the developmentally disabled, working with organizations such as NYSARC and AHRC Nassau, nonprofit agencies that support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She frequently gives presentations to bar associations on special needs issues, as well as presentations for disability organizations on the legal issues that individuals with disabilities face. She has also testified before the state legislature and before other state and federal agencies. She speaks publicly at schools and other organizations several times a month and estimates that she takes on about one pro bono case per month.

Because of her own individual experiences with the types of issues that her clients face, Gumerove recognizes the dangers of getting too emotionally involved with her work, which can negatively affect the client. "I understand the pressure my clients are under because I live it every day," she says.

Her ability to empathize with her clients and understand their difficulties has been one of the reasons for her success. "There's no question that my focus on my niche has made me successful," Gumerove says, "and that I credit to my daughter."