

RECORD TOTALS	DAY	WEEK	YEAR
PROPERTY SALES	53	210	12,260
MORTGAGES	63	298	22,305
FORECLOSURE NOTICES	0	120	9,931
BUILDING PERMITS	0	305	25,840



RECORD TOTALS	DAY	WEEK	YEAR
BANKRUPTCIES	92	550	29,157
BUSINESS LICENSES	9	69	4,682
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	52	368	20,829
MARRIAGE LICENSES	0	0	4,031

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Susser Reflects on 15 Years in Immigration Law

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REBEKAH HEARN | The Daily News

Lynn Susser, managing partner of **Siskind Susser LLP**, has been selected for inclusion in the 2010 edition of The Best Lawyers in America in immigration law.



LYNN SUSSER
Position: Managing Partner
Firm: Siskind Susser LLP
Basics: Siskind Susser is celebrating its 15th anniversary as an immigration practice this year. The firm is one of the largest immigration firms in North America with 11 attorneys on staff.

Susser's firm also is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. The firm is one of the largest immigration firms in North America with 11 attorneys on staff. Siskind Susser also launched the first immigration law Web site, www.visalaw.com, in 1994.

Susser practices exclusively in immigration and nationality law. She is a member of the Memphis Bar Association, the Association for Women Attorneys and the American Immigration Lawyers Association. She is a past chair of the MidSouth Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Currently, Susser is the AILA liaison to the Memphis office of the USCIS (formerly Immigration and Naturalization Services).

Susser has represented a wide variety of cases ranging from employment-based visa work and family immigration matters to political asylum and naturalization issues.

Prior to going to law school, Susser received her bachelor's degree in international business and served as the merchandise manager for a major U.S. manufacturer.

Currently, she serves on the board of directors of the Community Legal Center.

Q: What attracted you to the practice of immigration and naturalization law?

A: I met Greg Siskind while waiting on my bar results in 1994. He had just gone out on his own and he asked me to join him in a new immigration practice. I liked the idea of helping people to accomplish something positive. I wasn't interested in a litigious practice area or one that was highly adversarial, and immigration law is very service-oriented. The bonus is meeting interesting people from around the world and getting to know them.

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Q: What is one of the most difficult aspects of immigration law?

A: The most frustrating aspect of this practice area is the disconnect between the realities and needs of our country in the 21st century and the broken immigration system in which we work. The visa structure available under current law does not begin to meet the needs of U.S. businesses trying to operate competitively in a global economy. There is no guest worker visa for companies that need to supplement their U.S. work force with skilled workers from abroad, and the quotas placed on visas for highly skilled professionals are unrealistic in years when the economy is strong and unemployment is low. Both these things force American companies to scale down their U.S. operations in favor of going offshore.

Q: What has been one of the more difficult cases you've handled?

A: Currently, we are struggling with visas for foreign nurses. The (U.S.) Department of Labor has certified a national shortage of nurses and the United States is competing in the international marketplace for qualified nurses to supplement the U.S. work force. Hospitals and nursing homes are desperate for more nurses to meet the growing needs of our aging population. Because of quotas and backlogs in the employment-based categories, nurses with approved green card petitions are stuck waiting abroad for visa numbers for up to five years. To make matters worse, USCIS is denying approximately 50 percent of all petitions for temporary visas for nurses. The results are that cases are being appealed in record numbers and hospitals and patients are suffering.

Q: If you could change or fix something in the system you called broken, how would you do it?

A: Create a visa category for skilled and unskilled workers; make the quotas on visas for professionals market-driven so they go up when U.S. unemployment is low and go down in years when U.S. unemployment is high; and remove the bars to admission faced by millions of people already in the U.S. so those individuals could depart the country and apply for a visa at a U.S. consulate abroad and return to work legally. Under current law, if a person has been in the U.S. for more than a year unlawfully and they depart, they are barred from readmission for 10 years. This means that even if they have a U.S. citizen family member or a U.S. company that wants to sponsor them, they cannot legalize their status because if they leave they cannot return for a decade. The result is a large illegal population.

Q: How does working with the Community Legal Center relate to your immigration practice?

A: The CLC has long provided pro bono legal representation in civil matters (i.e. landlord/tenant disputes, divorces, etc.) to people that meet specific income guidelines.

I got involved a few years ago when my colleague, Jack Richbourg, and CLC Director Meg Jones had the idea to expand the program to include representation in Immigration Court. The immigration clinic has grown under Meg's leadership and now includes a bilingual intake coordinator and a part-time staff attorney.

Q: What do you think would most surprise people about an immigration law practice?

A: The vast majority of our clients are in the U.S. legally and are highly educated. We represent scientists, teachers, engineers, IT professionals, physicians, nurses, athletes, religious workers and entertainers, to name a few.

Q: What has most surprised you about practicing law?

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A: I think how much fun it is. I honestly enjoy going to work every day and feel very lucky to be able to say that. The other surprise for me is how much my clients appreciate what I do and how they continuously show their appreciation by bringing me samples of their traditional foods and gifts from their home countries. It really feels good to know we are making a difference in people's lives.

Q: How do you feel about the firm having reached its 15th anniversary?

A: I am so thankful to our many wonderful clients and very proud of our dedicated staff. The past 15 years have flown by so quickly I can't believe it. When I think back over all the interesting cases I've handled and the amazing people I've had the honor of representing, I am awed. The firm has undergone many changes but we have never lost sight of our primary goals: the best available immigration expertise and excellent client service. Hopefully these things will enable us to celebrate many more anniversaries.

