

## In Her Own Words: For Chioma Deere, estate planning is a lifeline



Chioma Deere, Attorney, SSRGA, Boca Raton, Florida

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By [Ellen Sherberg](#) – Bizwomen Contributor, The Business Journals  
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*Chioma Deere's personal experience influenced the direction of her legal career and changed how she serves her clients and their future generations through estate planning.*

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a lawyer. Growing up in Jamaica and later in the Bronx, I saw how access to opportunity and justice could change lives. I wanted to be part of that change. What I didn't realize then was that the path to becoming a lawyer wouldn't be a straight line; it would be full of unexpected turns and challenges.

While applying to law school, I became a mother. My son was still only a few months old when I began my legal journey. I earned my paralegal certificate, worked full-time as a paralegal by day, and attended law school at night for four years. It was exhausting, but I was driven by determination and love. Law school gave me the flexibility and community I needed to succeed: professors who saw me, classmates who became lifelong friends, and a program that understood that many of us were balancing families and careers alongside our studies.

After earning my law degree, I moved to Florida, where much of my family had relocated. I started my legal career as a law clerk and soon became a trial attorney, focusing on civil and commercial litigation. I loved the strategy and rigor of litigation; it sharpened my mind and taught me to look at situations from various perspectives.

About a decade later in my legal career, a sudden and serious illness in my family reshaped how I understood estate planning. What I once viewed as something associated with death, I learned, is that estate planning is about life, one that protects families, preserves hard-earned wealth and provides clarity during moments of uncertainty. That experience made it impossible to ignore the growing pull I felt toward helping families navigate estate planning, probate, and trust administration.

That pull led me to change my career. In 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, I took a leap of faith and opened my own firm, Deere Law Firm. It was both terrifying and exhilarating. The world had gone virtual, and technology became the bridge between my clients and me. My background in electronic discovery and cyber security gave me a unique advantage. I was able to use technology to make the estate-planning process more efficient and accessible for my clients. As a Black woman in estate planning, I see my work as a calling. I am passionate about educating my community on estate planning, probate, trust administration, and asset protection. I have seen firsthand what happens when families are unprepared, and how the lack of proper planning can lead to the loss of generational wealth and avoidable conflict during moments of grief. My goal is to help change that narrative, one family and one plan at a time. Helping people preserve their legacies is deeply meaningful to me; it is how I blend my love for the law with my purpose.

Along the way, I learned success is not linear. I am grateful for mentors, clients, and family who support me and allowed me to create my own path.

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