

Maité Medero Benítez

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Attorney at Law, Labor Practice Leader
Estrella LLC

Up until 7th or 8th grade, Maité Medero Benítez was set on being a teacher, but then a sudden awareness of the concepts of justice and fairness took hold of her.

"I became conscious of rules and laws, and how whether you knew about them or not, you had to obey them; I felt it was kind of unfair that there are people who did not know about the law but the law affected them," said Medero, who joined Estrella LLC in 2009, where she has had the opportunity to continue to expand her practice in labor and employment law, successfully representing employers in litigation and mediations in courts and administrative forums as well. "At the time, Hollywood may have taken a part in this decision, because I remember being troubled by secondary characters in movies who were affected by the law."

Medero said she felt drawn to labor law, after her first stint as an attorney in 2006 at Ramos & Toyos Law Offices, where she focused on labor and employment law, gaining extensive experience in both private industry and the public sector, and where attorney Yolanda Toyos served as a mentor.

"Labor law, I associate it a lot with family law because, for example, it exacerbates passions when you have a problem or a situation with someone at work; it is as if you have a problem with your sibling because, after all, we spend most of our daily lives with people at work," Medero explained. "Employers have to keep in perspective that if there is such a situation at the workplace, it has consequences for everything, from the morale of those employees to the productivity of that operation."

As for her advice to young professionals starting their careers, Medero said: "On your journey, accept all criticism with an open heart, but be mindful that some people have personal agendas and will criticize you only to put you down and advance their own interests."

"Stay away from those," Medero stressed. "Also, there is not a unique way to do things and meet goals. Don't let anyone make you believe their way is the only way and that you are doing things wrong for doing otherwise."



Full Name: Maite Medero Benítez
Birth Date: Jan. 1, 1981
Place of Birth: San Juan, P.R.
Education: Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Forensic Psychology from UPR Carolina; Juris Doctor degree from UPR School of Law
Marital Status: Married with two children
Favorite Food/Restaurant: Shrimp in garlic sauce/the Greenhouse

Favorite Beverage: Green tea
Favorite Place to Shop: The Mall of San Juan
Dream Destination: Balearic Islands, Spain
Car Drives: Lexus RX350
Nightstand Reading: "Becoming," by Michelle Obama
Slogan/Motto: "You fail when you stop moving"; and "Pursue progress not perfection."

Ana María Cintrón

Founder & Executive Director
Causa Local

Starting out in one of the Big Four as an auditor at Deloitte Puerto Rico, to later begin her own organization, Ana María Cintrón, founder and executive director of Causa Local, wants to help startups access capital.

Causa Local is a nonprofit created to disrupt the way the capital ladder is accessed—via innovative platforms and programs so startups can achieve sustainable growth, as well as helping with disaster preparedness, improving revenue models and more, Cintrón explained. She said this all started with a team she described as "hustlers," who ran a co-working space during the day while growing a capital access platform on the side. That platform is Kiva Puerto Rico, which is part of Kiva, the nonprofit organization that provides small loans to help communities.

Causa Local is a very active part of the startup ecosystem and collaborates with several organizations, including Kiva.

"We want to work parallel to key players, improving the island's financial health and having an impact on our public policies to access capital through data-driven modules," Cintrón said. The biggest challenges, she explained, are getting grants that support the operation, and "fundraising and connecting strong small-business owners to work with who are willing to receive a loan and grow with us."

Despite the challenges, Cintrón is very proud to be able to help more than 150 small-business owners with more than \$1 million in loans. The Causa Local executive director is passionate about her work because she is very invested in the "doers" who are working hard to improve Puerto Rico's economy.

Given how inspired she is by her parents, her team and people starting their own business, it is no surprise that her advice is to keep working toward a goal.

"Never lose focus and always put your goals and causes first; don't let your ego drive you. Never give up on your dreams, even if it [means] having two jobs. Always focus on positive solutions and keep away from negative people or vibes," Cintrón said.



Full Name: Ana María Cintrón
Birth Date: May 10, 1986
Place of Birth: Ponce, P.R.
Education: Bachelor's degree in Accounting, UPR Río Piedras
Marital Status: "Single and ready to mingle. Hah hah, just kidding, but yes, I'm single."
Favorite Food/Restaurants: Tortillas Doña Lola/La Hacienda, Cocina Al Fondo, Santaella, Prros Locos, Vianda, Paulina Escanes and Mizumi

Favorite Beverages: Champagne or sugar-free margaritas served at Paulina Escanes
Favorite Places to Shop: Santurce and San Patricio POP
Dream Destination: French Riviera
Car Drives: Grey Volkswagen Tiguan
Nightstand Reading: "The Complete Stories," by Edgar Allan Poe; "Luis Llorens Torres: Obra Poética," by Luis Llorens Torres; "Data Driven Nonprofits," by Steve MacLaughlin
Slogan/Motto: "Work harder & stay humble."