



# Marissa Wiley – THE BUSINESS DOULA

BY JENNA CAPUTO

PHOTOS BY ANGELA MIA PHOTOGRAPHY & CONTRIBUTED BY THE WILEY FAMILY

Marissa Wiley isn't afraid to stand up for herself or for others, which is part of what makes her such a great lawyer. She's also a firm believer in equity and inclusion and treats all her clients, colleagues, and projects with that in mind.

Growing up in Goshen, NY, Marissa enjoyed reading and spending time with her cousins. She attended Vassar College for her undergrad, majoring in both English and Hispanic Studies. While there, she spent a full semester studying at the University of Carlos III in Spain and had a formative experience. "It was great to push myself into fluency and to live within a different culture, but the most valuable lesson was how to thrive outside of my comfort zone," she says. "I had never been so far from home, and I learned that I could strike out on my own there. My favorite memory is my visit to the Alhambra, which I think is one of the most beautiful structures in the world."

Marissa received her law degree from Hofstra University School of Law, graduating magna cum laude, then took a job at a prestigious law firm in NYC. As much as she enjoyed life in the city, she came to realize it wasn't going to work for her long term. "I love the city, but it is an intense lifestyle.

I wanted a more relaxed pace. I hoped the Capital District would balance my desire for a high quality of life with my professional ambition. Luckily, I've found that to be the case, and I am very happy here."

After moving to the Capital Region, Marissa wanted to make some new friends and establish her life in this area. A friend of a friend invited her to attend a latke cook-off party for Hannukah in 2014. Hosted at Cj's apartment, the cook-off was the beginning of a friendship that turned into a life partnership. Cj offered to show Marissa around to the various Asian supermarkets in the area, and they soon found that they had a lot more in common than just a love for ethnic food.

A Niskayuna native, Cj grew up creating art, spending time with her friends, and playing sports. A varsity softball player, she became captain of the team in her sophomore year. She also played varsity soccer and won MVP one year as goalie for the team. Cj studied Karate, earning her blue belt in Budokai Karate and plans on studying Tae Kwon Do next. A woman of many talents, Cj's artistic side comes out in everything she does. "Cj is an artist in every aspect," says Marissa. "No







matter the medium, she enjoys the freedom of creating something. Her last painting series of koi fish have been displayed at various art shows. She finds art in any medium she touches.” In addition to crafting, Cj also creates masterpiece birthday cakes for Marissa and the kids and enjoys baking in general, as well as making traditional Korean meals like Jap chae and pork belly wraps with banchan. She is also a

published photographer. Her favorite styles are portraits and documentary, but she loves travel photography as well. However, Cj is most well-known for her art in running her company, Amasian Contracting, working in painting, flooring, drywall, and tiling. She was nationally recognized for her talents and was even a guest on TV personality, Adam Corolla’s, podcast, flying out to LA several times and filming his pilot TV show with him. It was the perfect ending to her contracting career when she decided to hang up her hammer after 19 years in the industry and focus on caring for their kids.

Marissa had both of their children at home with the help of the team at Heartspace Midwifery. The births of her children were defining experiences in her life and her greatest achievements. In addition to being a warrior mom, Marissa became the first woman in several decades to make partner in the Albany office of Nixon Peabody, LLP, and one of the youngest partners at the firm at the time. A global 100 law firm with more than 600 attorneys collaborating across major practice areas in cities across the US, Europe, and Asia, Marissa works in the Business & Finance Department. As a corporate practitioner in the private equity area, Marissa considers herself a business doula, shepherding companies and their owners through moments of transition like beginning, funding, investing in, building, reorganizing, or breaking down a business. She also represents individuals buying or receiving equity in a company, but typically represents middle-market companies and investors. Her clients are within a variety of industries, but she has particular experience in the health care, renewable energy, food and beverage, and entertainment industries, including a fun niche practice representing celebrities in connection with their business ventures like a supermodel receiving equity in companies in exchange for her marketing services or a social media star in connection with a joint venture for a fragrance line. In 2020, Marissa was honored to receive the prestigious 40 Under 40 award from the Albany Business Review for her work so far.

In addition to her work at the firm, Marissa is busy reaching out to others to help them on their business journeys as well. A member of the Capital District Professionals Referral Network, Marissa participates with a group of trusted advisors to develop relationships, share knowledge and resources, and create business

opportunities. As a board member, executive committee member, and secretary of the Upstate Capital Association, Marissa is a part of a robust membership network with a mission to increase access to capital for companies and deal flow for investors across New York. She is also the co-chair of the LGBTQA+ Resources Group at her firm and a member of the Diversity Advisory Board, which provides guidance and counsel to firm management at the highest level on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and other firm issues. For fun, Marissa and Cj are part of the Confrerie de la Chaine des Rotisseurs, the oldest and largest food and wine society in the world. Marissa provides pro bono legal representation to help transgender people obtain name changes and gender marker corrections, and she represents Jajja’s Kids, a non-profit organization that provides a safe and loving home, supportive, nurturing community, and access to strong educational and leadership opportunities to children in need in Kampala, Uganda.

Cj initially became involved with Jajja’s Kids due to her friendship with the director of the program. She quickly became a board member and introduced Marissa to the organization. In 2015, Marissa and Cj traveled with other members of the organization to Uganda to spend time with the children and make improvements to their home. They spent a little over two weeks there. “It was an eye-opening and humbling experience,” says Marissa. “We left feeling very fortunate for our abundant privilege and dedicated to providing help and access to resources as we can.” The trip wasn’t all work, though. They took a break in the middle of their time there to travel the countryside, embarking on a safari to experience chimps, lions, elephants, and hippos up close and personal.

This year has been an exciting year as Marissa and Cj welcomed their son to the family along with their daughter and their zhuchon dog. When not working, they love to do anything outside. “We live in a beautiful area of the world, and we try to make the most of that privilege,” says Marissa. Kayaking, hiking, and skiing are favorite activities, as well as visiting the various farms and farmers markets in the region.

They also love to travel, both within the US and internationally. Marissa took Cj to Peru for a surprise birthday trip where they traveled the countryside. Cj proposed to Marissa by the ancient ruins in the Sacred Valley. They also traveled the island of Sicily for two weeks. “We experienced exquisite foods, beautiful cathedrals, ancient ruins, and breathtaking views,” Marissa remembers. But their favorite place to go is Mexico. Before the pandemic and kids, they visited







—continued

the country every year for rest and relaxation. They even had their wedding there in 2017. They can't wait to share their love of different cultures with their children in the future and are looking forward to their first vacation as a family of five to their beach home for some quality, relaxing family time. "Also, there is an ice cream spot where Cj has gone to since she was a child, and a doughnut shop that I swear has the best doughnut I've ever had in my life, both of which we will frequent with great enjoyment!" says Marissa.

Family time is their favorite time. "Our passion is our family," Marissa states. "There is nowhere we would rather be than with each other." Their family motto is to "always be kind," and they work for the continued progression of equity and inclusion for all.

*For more information on Jajja's Kids  
or to see how you can help, visit*

**[www.jajaskids.org](http://www.jajaskids.org)**



## WORKING FROM HOME

# Take Care of Your 20/20 in 2022

BY CIERRA ORLYK

Some people love working from home, some people hate it. No matter where you stand, there's one thing definitely suffering: your eyes. Whether you work from home or not, these eye care tips will help ensure your relationship between the computer screen and your eyes stays healthy.

### **Balance your day out.**

If you work from home or generally stare at your computer screen for an extended amount of time daily, try to balance your

screen time with off-screen time. On your lunch break, give your eyes a rest and flip through a magazine instead of scrolling through your phone notifications. After work, instead of watching a TV show or movie, opt for reading a book, solving a crossword puzzle or playing a game with your family—your eyes will thank you.

### **Use the Screen Time feature on your phone.**

If you find it difficult to put your phone down and step away from the addicting complex of social media, try using your phone's built in screen-time tracker. You can set limits for how much time you'd like to spend on certain apps (like social media) in a day. The time's-up notification will be a reminder to put your phone down and give your eyes a break. Apple users can access screen time by going to their Settings, clicking on "Screen Time," and setting limits as they'd like. Android users can go to "Settings," click on "Digital Wellbeing & Parental Controls," click "Dashboard," select the app they'd like to restrict, then set the time by clicking on the hourglass.

### **Practice the 20-20-20 rule.**

Did you know that humans decrease their blinking to a half or third of the normal amount when staring at screens? This can cause unpleasant symptoms like dry, irritated, and tired eyes. The 20-20-20 rule has been shown to counter these eye strain symptoms. The rule says that every 20 minutes you're looking at a screen, you should look at an object 20 feet away for

20 seconds. To find something 20 feet away, just peer out your window; it doesn't have to be a precise measurement. Keep a timer of 20 minutes going throughout your day to remind you to take a break. Learn more about the 20-20-20 rule at [www.healthline.com/health/eye-health/20-20-20-rule](http://www.healthline.com/health/eye-health/20-20-20-rule).

### **Clean your screen.**

Dirty screens not only look bad, but they can also hurt your eyes. Looking through grime and fingerprints can cause your eyes to strain and produce some unpleasant symptoms. Also, dust on the screen can affect the sharpness and contrast of your display, which can make you increase the brightness, which strains your eyes even more. Luckily, this problem has a simple fix—get a microfiber cloth and gently wipe your computer screen down before you use it.

### **Use the Night Shift feature on your device.**

Both Mac and Windows users have the option to tint the display warm instead of cool. This helps reduce eye strain and improve sleep, as blue light can keep you up at night. Mac users can click the apple in the top left bar, click "Displays," click on "Night Shift" and then schedule it for your desired time (standard is sunset to sunrise, but you can schedule it during your work hours). Windows users can open the Start Menu, click the gear icon for "Settings," choose "System," select "Display," and then switch the "Night Light" on. You can then adjust the settings and timing of it.