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A two-partner pharmaceutical consulting firm has opened on Witherspoon Street, where it has offices in the building owned by Barsky Homes. Emma Barsky, one of the partners, is married to Roman Barsky, the residential builder. The other partner is Leonard A. Grunbaum.

"With our combined experience of nearly 50 years, we cover all aspects - good manufacturing practices, good laboratory practices, and good clinical practices, and we also do computer validation," says Barsky.

Barsky grew up speaking Russian in an area now known as the Ukraine. Her father was a mechanical engineer and her mother used to be a journalist, teacher and later a librarian, who worked for a law firm after arrival to the United States. Emma came to this country at age 15 and met her husband on a blind date when she was still in high school in Maplewood.

They married right after her high school graduation. Their son was born in 1987, the year she graduated from Rutgers University. He is currently at Bryant College, and their daughter is a sophomore at Princeton High School.

During her career Barsky worked at Jacobus Pharmaceutical, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and Sankyo Pharma Development. "As an analytical chemist, I built up a department that would support testing for all the clinical studies done in the United States. I ended up in quality assurance, was transferred to technical chemistry manufacturing and controls (CMC), and did all the supporting operations for manufacturing, including testing and distribution. But I always wanted to be independent."

Barsky met Grunbaum when they worked on a computer system to support quality assurance operations. He was president of the consulting firm, and she was Sankyo's project manager.

"We always work together from the practical standpoint," says Grunbaum.

"We don't see a lot of practical solutions out there. Instead of a cookie cutter approach, we wanted to tailor our approach to what makes sense under a given circumstance."

Grunbaum's parents escaped from the Nazis in Hungary. His father had a laundry business in Brooklyn, and his mother was a seamstress. An only child, he graduated in 1967 from Long Island University, where he also earned an MBA. He lives in Manalapan with his wife and has two grown children.

He was president of a 30-person firm in Warren, Meta Solutions, and has also worked as an independent consultant, a regional sales manager for Documentation Development Inc. (a documentation and training firm), in financial services in Manhattan, as a computer auditor for Coopers & Lybrand with Johnson & Johnson as a client, and as a computer auditor and consultant for KPMG Peat Marwick for pharmaceutical clients.

"I could look at my father as a role model as someone who made it on his own," he says. "I realized I had the wherewithal to go out on my own, and the two of us complement each other perfectly."