

WASHINGTONIAN

WWW.WASHINGTONIAN.COM

December 2004

TOP LAWYERS

Washington is home to some of the world's best lawyers. Here are the Top 30—plus 750 who are right behind them. Save the list—you never know when you'll be arrested, get served with a subpoena, need a new will, get a divorce, or worse.

New Yorkers still complain that Washington isn't hip enough, but when it comes to hiring lawyers, they can't come here fast enough.

For decades, New Yorkers tended to look down at Washington law firms. But when indicted New York lawyer Mark Belnick needed a savior this year, he turned to Reid Weingarten, a partner at Washington's Steptoe & Johnson.

Belnick is no legal novice. He had been a partner at New York's Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, one of the nation's toniest firms. Belnick was known in Washington for his role in the Iran-Contra inquiry as chief deputy to Senate counsel Arthur Liman.

Liman was a New Yorker who couldn't help but show his disdain for the Washington legal mentality. Many believe that his New York orientation accounted for much of the confusion and ineffectiveness that plagued the Iran-Contra investigation.

Liman died in 1997, and Belnick eventually left Paul Weiss and became general counsel to one of his clients, Tyco International. When Tyco's finances became the subject of a federal investigation, Belnick was indicted for allegedly taking millions of dollars from the company in undisclosed

interest-free loans and bonuses.

His hiring of Washington's Weingarten—who once worked for the Public Integrity Section at the Justice Department—paid off in mid-July when a jury acquitted Belnick on all counts.

Or take Dick Grasso, the former head of the New York Stock Exchange. Grasso counts dozens of the top attorneys in New York City as personal friends, but when he and the NYSE began knocking heads over his compensation, he bypassed the New York bar and hired Brendan Sullivan Jr., the ace litigator from DC's Williams & Connolly.

Sullivan took the case despite already being involved in a six-month trial in Hartford, Connecticut—he's defending Walter Forbes, the former CEO of Cendant Corporation, who is charged with insider trading and defrauding investors. That trial is still going on.

When former NBA basketball star Jayson Williams was accused of shooting his chauffeur, Washington's William R. "Billy" Martin was called on to save the day. Williams was acquitted on the most serious charge against him, aggravated manslaughter.

These cases represent a sea change. A couple of decades ago, Washington defendants often

sought representation by a well-known attorney from New York or Boston. When President Nixon got in trouble, he hired a string of attorneys from out of town—first Charles Alan Wright from Texas, then James St. Clair from Boston. Neither had much success.

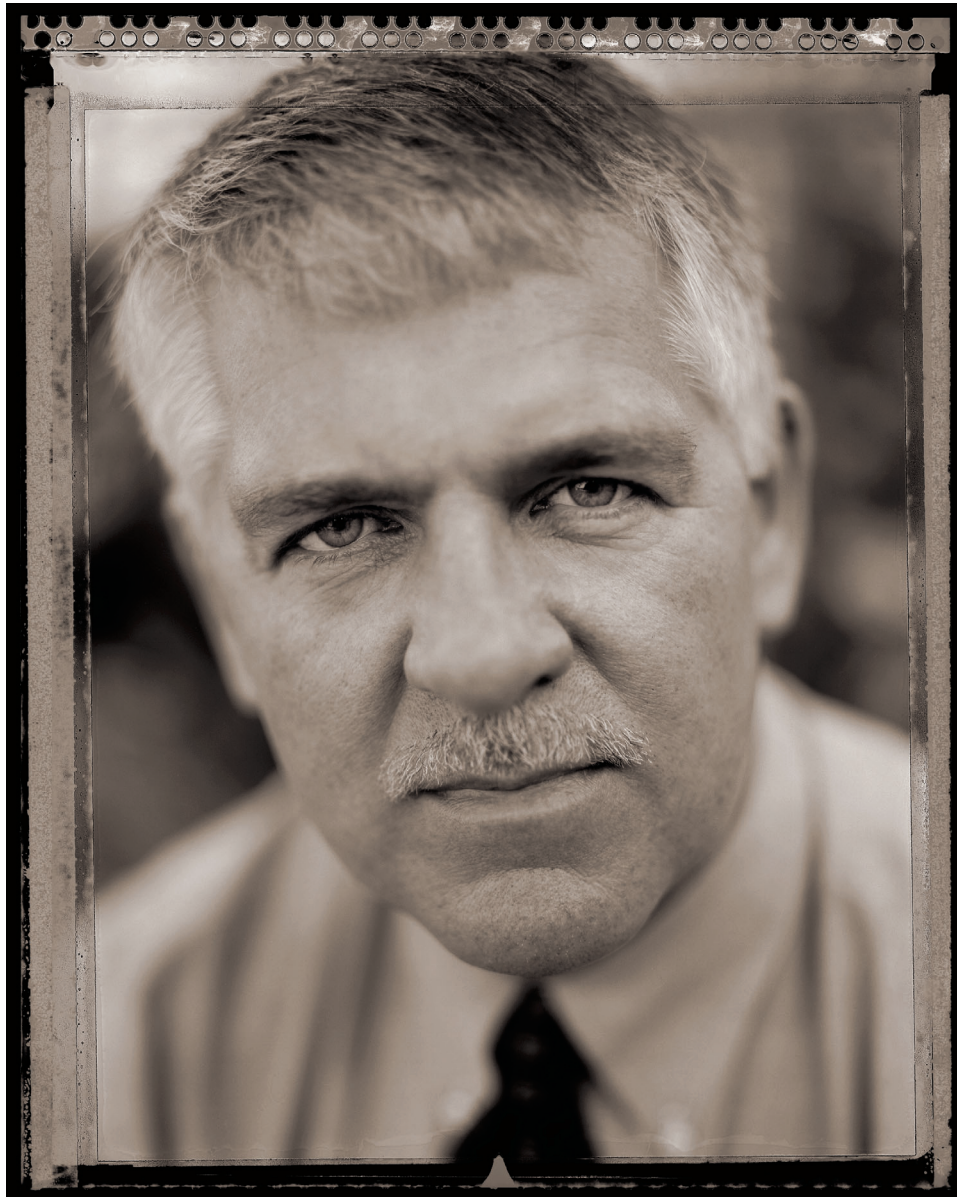
President Clinton learned the lesson. When the impeachment team in the House of Representatives brought in an attorney from Chicago to prosecute him, Clinton stuck with David Kendall of Williams & Connolly.

Lawyering is Washington's top industry, creating some \$4 billion in gross revenues distributed among partners, associates, court reporters, paralegals, and messengers. Some 80,000 attorneys ply their trade in the Washington area, creating at least an equal number of jobs in support.

Among that number are some of the best lawyers not only in the country but in the world. Later in this article is a list of some 780 of the top lawyers in Washington in a variety of practice areas that readers might someday find useful. But before we get to that list, here are 30 Washington attorneys who have attained national and even world-class status in their fields.

By KIM ISAAC EISLER

Photography by MATTHEW GIRARD



WILLIAM MCLUCAS — *The former SEC honcho is the lawyer of choice for embattled corporate boards.*

6. William McLucas (Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr). Investigations of corporate greed and corruption couldn't have come at a better time for Bill McLucas, a former top honcho at the Securities and Exchange Commission. He now gets to charge by the hour for work he used to do on government salary. He has become the lawyer of choice for corporate boards trying to sort out the misdeeds and transactions of their CEOs and general counsels. Who hires McLucas? Start with Enron's board. Move on to WorldCom and keep going.

14. Jamie Gorelick (Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr). She has

become famous through her work on the commission investigating the 9/11 attacks, but Gorelick achieved super-lawyer status before that. As a young attorney at Miller Cassidy, Gorelick was considered the best young lawyer anyone had seen in years. She went on to become Janet Reno's top deputy at Justice, vice chair at Fannie Mae, and now partner at Washington's top corporate-law firm. She has been sought out by corporations like General Electric and Lockheed Martin to conduct internal investigations. Her star is still rising—unless the Fannie Mae investigation gets in the way, she's a likely choice for a Cabinet post in a Democratic adminis-

tration, a prospect that does not hurt her ability to attract clients.

29. Seth Waxman (Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr). Supreme Court justice John Paul Stevens once described Waxman, 53 in November, as the most brilliant young lawyer he'd ever heard. Waxman now advises a host of corporate clients in high-profile appellate cases, but he also finds time to advise people like *Washington Post* reporter Glenn Kessler, who was subpoenaed by a special prosecutor in connection with the leak that revealed the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame. Hire Waxman and you get a lawyer who might sit on the high court one day.

780 TOP LAWYERS

HERE'S WHO TO CALL

Washington has lots of legal talent in every practice area. To help answer the question "Who are you going to call?" we have compiled a list of top lawyers in legal specialties that readers are most likely to need. The list includes lawyers from Rockville to Woodbridge. It includes attorneys who can help if you need a divorce, have a brother who has been arrested or a grandparent with Social Security problems, or wake up and find your name splashed across the front page of the *Washington Post*. Washington creates unusual legal problems. You never know when you or your employer is going to become the subject of a prosecutor's interest or a congressional hearing. To compile this list we contacted hundreds of attorneys in each of the specialties and asked which lawyer in their field—other than themselves—they would trust with their business. Lawyers with the most recommendations made the list. Lawyers are listed under the categories for which they are best known, but their practices are often much broader. If your situation doesn't seem to fit any of the categories given, find the one that sounds most like what you need and start calling. If you reach a lawyer who can't help you, he or she usually can refer you to someone who can.

Law firms are located in the District of Columbia except where noted.

CRIMINAL DEFENSE: I

YOU'RE UNDER INVESTIGATION!

You don't have to be a criminal to find yourself drawn into an awkward congressional investigation or, worse, a grand-jury inquiry by the Justice Department or the US Attorney's Office. Here are people to call.

Lloyd Cutler, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

SECURITIES

I LOST A BUNDLE!

A lot of legal work in Washington is generated by the staff of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Thousands of attorneys spend their days making sure the capitalist system works fairly and that the stock market does not become an insiders' playground. If you have a company under assault, or you feel a company whose stock you own has deceived you, here are the lawyers who know the SEC and securities issues best.

Howard Shapiro, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

William McLucas, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

Jamie Gorelick, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

BANKING AND PRIVACY

MY NAME'S BEEN STOLEN?

The computer age has raised a host of privacy problems, including the nuisance of identity theft. There are many new laws to protect banks and bank customers. Here are lawyers who know the field.

Gregory Baer, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

David Medine, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

BANKRUPTCY

STARTING OVER

Bankruptcy, whether personal or commercial, is often a path not to ruin but to recovery from financial problems. Here are lawyers who know how to guide you through it.

Lisa F. Al-Bashir, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

Duane Morse, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

William J. Perlstein, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

James Wrathall, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

FOOD AND DRUGS

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Yet another federal agency that has spawned hundreds of lawyers is the Food and Drug Administration. These lawyers renew drug patents and get regulatory approval for new treatments.

Mark Heller, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

ANTITRUST

STOP THAT MERGER!

As with the FDA lawyers, the average citizen seldom needs one of these. But antitrust law is a staple of Washington practice, and if you own a business threatened by a giant, you might find one of these top antitrust lawyers very helpful.

Bill Kolasky, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

A. Douglas Melamed, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

SUING ON PRINCIPLE

A handful of specialists argue cases before the United States Supreme Court. These are the men and women to look for when you believe your constitutional rights are being violated.

Randolph Moss, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

Seth Waxman, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr

CIVIL RIGHTS

SHE CAN'T PLAY?

Whenever legislation is enacted, a body of law springs up around it. That certainly was the case with Title IX, which encourages women's sports in schools. Here are some attorneys to call if your daughter's not being allowed to play high-school football or you suspect that you've been the victim of discrimination.

John Payton, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr