

OCS Weekly Bulletin

Upcoming Firm Events, Fall OCI Dates/Deadlines & Career-Related Articles

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About OCS

The Office of Career Services (OCS) serves as a bridge between students, alumni and employers. The staff helps students and alumni to shape and realize their career goals. We also provide counseling, workshops and resources on judicial clerkships, international opportunities and non-law alternatives.

OCS is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The office is located on the first floor in Room 143 in the Law School's office building on Nathan Abbott Way.

Upcoming Firm Events

- **Jenner & Block 2L Pre-OCI Reception:**
July 16th from 5:30 - 7:30 pm in Chicago office
- **2L Open House- Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP:**
July 17th at 5:30 pm in Charlotte, NC office
- **Latham & Watkins Summer Receptions for 2Ls:**
July 18th:
 5:30-7:30 pm in Chicago
 6:00-9:00 pm in New York
 5:00-7:00 pm in San Diego
 5:00-7:00 pm in San Francisco
 5:30-7:30 pm in Washington, DC
July 31st:
 5:30-7:30 pm in Los Angeles
 5:30-7:30 pm in Orange County
 5:30-7:30 pm in Silicon Valley
- **Goodwin Procter's "Rock the Town" Cocktail Reception for 2Ls:**
 July 24th, 7:30-9:30 pm at Hudson Hotel, New York
 July 25th, 6:00-8:00 pm at Goodwin Procter Conf. Center, Boston
 July 30th, 7:00-9:00pm at Tabaq Bistro, Washington, DC

For more information about these receptions to view the invitations, please visit the OCS webpage:

<http://www.law.stanford.edu/experience/careers/ocs/students/>

Fall OCI Dates/Deadlines

Bidding:

The bidding period for Fall OCI 2007 began at midnight on July 1. Students have until 5:00pm on August 1 to enter their unavailable times and bids in Symplicity. For instructions on entering unavailable times and bids, please refer to the Fall OCI Packet located online here:

[http://www.law.stanford.edu/experience/careers/ocs/students/#\(oci\)_on-campus_interviewing_program_](http://www.law.stanford.edu/experience/careers/ocs/students/#(oci)_on-campus_interviewing_program_)

Interview Assignments:

Interview assignments will be available on Symplicity beginning Friday, August 3rd/ Add-Drop period begins.

Resumes:

Resumes are due on Symplicity by 5:00pm on Friday, August 10th.

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Middle-Market Firms Thriving in the Land of Giants

David T. Brown / Special to The National Law Journal
July 2, 2007

For some time now, law firms and legal industry observers have been obsessed with the creation of large law firms, primarily via mergers and acquisitions. There were more than 50 law firm mergers in the United States in 2006, a greater number than in each of the preceding three years.

At the same time, questions are being asked about the viability of middle-market firms that choose not to participate in the merger mania. What so many observers seem to be missing is that this “megafirm” trend actually is helping to ensure the continued success of middle-market firms and the attorneys who work for them. While the leaders of the nation’s largest firms are hard at work trying to identify and woo attorneys in the middle market, other forces are at work in the wider business and legal environments.

In the general business world, the insights of Bo Burlingham, author of *Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big* (2005), are receiving significant attention. Burlingham, who is editor-at-large of *Inc.* magazine, has firmly asserted that “growth for growth’s sake is out,” and that truly great companies are focused on excellence rather than size. “Small Is the New Big,” *Inc.*, Feb. 2006, at 80.

Burlingham’s work shines new light on advertising executive Jay Chiat’s famous quote, “How big can we get before we get bad?” Simon London, “Why size isn’t everything for the modern multinational,” *Financial Times*, Nov. 2, 2005, at *Business Life* 14. Applying this question to the current business environment, he explained that many of the world’s 150 largest companies are struggling to achieve consistent growth. Others are profitable, but not very complex. Microsoft Corp., for example, earns a substantial portion of its profit from the sales of one product — the Windows computer operating system. In addition, the company employs only 60,000 people, compared to Wal-Mart’s 1.3 million. *(continued on next page)*

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Middle-Market Firms Thriving in the Land of Giants

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Also suggesting a bright future for middle-market firms is the continual growth in the small-to-midsize business sector, which represents the primary client base for these firms. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, companies with 500 or fewer employees created 60% to 80% of net new jobs annually during the decade ending in 2006. These businesses, which represent 99.7% of all U.S. employers, create more than 50% of nonfarm private gross domestic product. “Frequently Asked Questions,” *The Small Bus. Advoc.*, July-Aug. 2006, at 5.

While these companies may not be among the country’s largest, their legal needs can be quite complex. In fact, these clients sometimes need global representation that middle-market firms can satisfy through highly effective networks of select, like-minded firms around the world.

One need only look to the accounting industry for a powerful analogy of middle-market potential. Following consolidation and other changes during recent years, accounting firms that have focused on the middle market have thrived. On a national level, CCH Inc.’s Public Accounting Report 2006 illustrates the trend that non-Big Four firms are growing at a faster clip than the Big Four. In fact, the data show that non-Big Four firms experienced 21.9% growth in 2005 — an increase from the previous year’s 16.4% mark. Big Four firms grew by only 14.7%, an increase from their 6.9% mark in 2004. CCH Inc. Public Accounting Report 2006 and CCH Inc. Public Accounting Report 2005.

Clearly, accounting firms such as RSM McGladrey Inc., Moss Adams LLP and Plante & Moran LLP are all reaping the rewards of their focus on the middle market. Logic dictates that as there become fewer middle-market law firms, similar benefits will accrue to firms that remain in the sector.

These factors — growth in the small-to-midsize business sector, combined with the trend toward law firm consolidation — should ensure substantial, increasing demand for the legal services provided by

the middle-market law firms that remain focused on delivering high levels of service and value.

The voice of the market

It is important, of course, to examine what the legal marketplace is trying to tell us about the megafirm trend. In a recent opinion piece, Thomas Sager, chief in-house litigation counsel for E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., wrote that merger mania is not a good thing for clients. Among his conclusions, which are consistent with Burlingham’s view that big is not always better, is the observation that law firm mergers often result in rate increases that are not tied to added efficiencies or other client benefits. In addition, he noted that “most of us” hire law firms for their expertise and the quality of their lawyers, not their size and reach. He concluded that when firms grow very large they find it difficult to maintain their culture — one of the things that made them attractive to the client in the first place. Sager added that post-merger conflict issues often create an environment in which a client can no longer work with a preferred firm or attorney. Thomas Sager, *Bigger Isn’t Better*, *Am. Law.*, March 1, 2007, at 89.

In private discussions with the author, legal recruiters confirm that these issues are already beginning to play out in favor of middle-market law firms. These consultants report that many middle-market firms are ramping up their recruiting capabilities in direct response to the fallout from increased megafirm merger activity. After spending their careers building their middle-market portfolios, many partners suddenly find themselves working for a much larger firm. With that dramatic shift comes the possibility of losing their clients due to conflicts, cultural-fit issues and higher fees. These and other factors can drive talented attorneys to search for a new middle-market firm to call home.

In addition, many lateral recruits recognize that their clients might be more valued at a middle-market firm. They know that such firms often offer more opportunities for advancement, as well as the ability to do more substantive work earlier in their careers.

It is noteworthy that two major law firms announced recently that they are terminating or de-equitizing large numbers of partners. In both cases, law firm officials have said that profits per partner (PPP) are driving their moves. Leigh Jones, “Downsizing: Who’s Next?” *NLJ*, March 12, 2007, at 1. The rationale is that high PPP metrics will suggest high quality to clients and help the firm lure the best talent. But sophisticated clients don’t necessarily believe that. They understand that shedding less profitable attorneys — and their clients — doesn’t make the remaining lawyers any smarter or more efficient. Certainly, well-managed firms need to make strategic decisions that will help them become stronger businesses. But the focus on PPP clearly is driven in large part by the obsession with growth.

Meanwhile, the gigantism trend among large law firms consistently minimizes what should be the most fundamental tenet of all firms: to be intensely focused on client needs. When growth for growth’s sake — or for profit’s sake, no matter how it is rationalized — becomes the primary focal point of a firm, clients are relegated to the back seat, regardless of who they are.

Among the characteristics Burlingham attributes to “small giants” is that they “cultivate relationships with employers, customers and suppliers,” and that there are common purposes shared by all. The greatest strength of the best middle-market firms lies here. Those that have chosen to remain independent have thereby committed to their clients that they will be tomorrow what they are today — only better. The clients’ loyalty, trust — and yes, their business — will continue to be held in the highest regard.

Similarly, attorneys in independent middle-market firms will not wake up one day and realize that the clients they are devoted to are no longer welcome due to a post-merger conflict, or a sudden shift in business priorities, or because their books of business are not quite large enough for the new firm’s model. The attorneys know that what is expected of them by their firm

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will not change due to merger-focused business priorities.

Reason to celebrate

Certainly, many firms that grow through mergers and acquisitions remain successful and retain talented lawyers who value their clients. Likewise, there are plenty of global companies that require the resources and deep international platforms that the megafirm model provides. But it is time to reconsider the blanket admiration with which the marketplace views the growth-focused strategies that some of these firms have adopted. At the same time, as middle-market firms go about their business on behalf of their clients, many actually welcome the continuation of the merger trend. Every time a news

item appears on this topic, or a managing partner announces that his or her firm is de-equitizing partners in order to improve profitability, there is reason to celebrate for the client-focused middle-market firm.

As the gigantism trend continues, other realities in the business and legal arenas not only support the future of middle-market firms, but suggest that they will become ever more vital. Despite the prevailing perception that survival is the issue at hand, middle-market firms will continue to thrive as an important alternative for clients and attorneys who feel left behind by mergers and the strategic direction of the firms that engage in them. In fact, as these trends play out, middle-market firms should expect to receive calls from larger

clients as these companies grow increasingly dissatisfied with merger mania.

By continuously delivering excellence, rather than concentrating on growth, great middle-market firms committed to remaining independent are setting the gold standard for how and where all law firms should be focused.

David T. Brown is chairman of the management committee at Chicago-based Much Shelist. He can be reached at dbrown@muchshelist.com.

Are Law Firms Over-Surveyed and Underwhelmed?

Leigh Jones

The National Law Journal
06-25-2007

Getting ranked, awarded or listed among competitors is easier for law firms these days, but keeping up with the proliferation of publications designed to make them look special has become a lot more complicated.

By some estimates, law firms have about 200 chances each year to participate in rankings, awards programs or so-called "league table" publications that they hope will distinguish them from the competition.

Not only are firms finding their marketing resources stretched thin by the onslaught, but they also say it is getting tougher to wade through the rubbish.

"Not a day goes by that I don't come across another one from someone I've just never heard of," said Lloyd Pearson at White & Case.

Pearson, communications manager at the 1,907-attorney firm, was brought aboard last year to handle the flood of surveys, questionnaires, phone calls and research related to awards and rankings that the firm pursues each year. He previously was the editor at the international directory Chambers Global.

ALM, the parent company of The National Law Journal, has its own share of

rankings in its publications, which include the NLJ 250, the Am Law 200, the Minority Scorecard and more. Other popular surveys and rankings include those from Chambers & Partners, Legal 500 and Bloomberg, in addition to more mainstream ones such as Forbes and Fortune.

Various Who's Who listings are available for a wide array of practice areas, including environmental law, intellectual property and litigation. Numerous "Super Lawyer" and "Best"-type publications have launched in recent years. Law firms also can participate in a broad menu of award programs, some requiring them to either buy tickets to awards events or purchase trophies in order to receive the award. Publications that produce such directories or awards are both national and regional, and range from Working Mother to the Jacksonville Business Journal.

The deluge apparently flows from a combination of factors. The Internet has simplified the process of conducting surveys, observers say. Moreover, law firms have become more open to the marketing benefit that a ranking or an award can bring. And the publications themselves have discovered that playing to look-alike law firms that want to set themselves apart can be a lucrative business.

DIFFERENTIATING FIRMS

"Law firms will always find it useful to receive independent, credible, well-researched rankings that reward a firm's strength and commitment to an area," said Fred Gander, managing partner of Dewey Ballantine's London office, in an e-mail message. "It's getting harder and harder to distinguish these from those which play on vanity, or simply consume too much of our time." Dewey Ballantine, based in New York, has 544 attorneys.

The wide selection often lumped into the term "directories" has created what Pearson calls a segmentation of the market. In one group, he said, are organizations that blast electronic surveys to law firms in hopes of gathering information about everything from practice group size to number of wins at trial. With the rise in the number of surveys, the blast method has become less efficient, he said.

In the other group are organizations that are less "commercial," he said. Their products require interviewing clients, verifying information and conducting follow-up correspondence to dig for details. As opposed to publications that do little more than give law firms bragging rights, these types of rankings or directories can be useful for clients looking for representation.

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Are Law Firms Over-Surveyed and Underwhelmed?

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“The market in the U.S. has shifted from basic listing products and those based solely on peer review to a client research-led style of publication,” Pearson said. “This has produced much more informative, credible sources of information, but at the same time, places a greater strain on a law firm’s marketing department.”

The amount of work each survey, directory or contest requires varies significantly,” said Ralph Richardson, public relations manager at Los Angeles-based Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton, which has 424 attorneys.

“At times there seems to be a new directory each week,” he said. “Based on the length of the survey and how the data needs to be sliced and diced, the submission process can be very labor intensive.”

Although marketing departments generally handle the work -- and gain a perspective in distinguishing the good from the bad contests or directories -- amassing

the information often requires input from human resources, finance and the attorneys themselves.

A SPECIFIC TASK

As the number of directories and awards has grown, more firms, especially large international shops, have hired marketing professionals with specific expertise in the field to cover the work, Pearson said.

The strategy is more common for bigger firms that have to deal with many directories on a year-round basis.

Other firms have made sure that their existing marketing people get educated on the variety of awards and directories available. “This is probably the most common route for U.S. firms at the moment,” he said.

Still others have hired external consultants to support the in-house team, especially for the more time-consuming projects, he said.

Jay Jaffe, president and chief executive officer of Jaffe & Associates, a law

firm marketing company, estimates that about 70 publications, combined, offer roughly 200 directories, rankings and awards each year, and the list is growing.

The escalation in the numbers has spurred his company to develop a service that it plans to launch in the fall. It is designed to streamline the process for firms.

His company will provide some information for free, such as the names of the different publications and awards. Law firms also can have reminders of upcoming contest deadlines e-mailed for free.

The company will charge to help gather the information and, for a bigger fee, will help “affect the rankings,” Jaffe said.

“It means trying to do whatever you can do, whether it’s writing letters to clients, talking to people, whatever we can do to help,” he said.

In Sheppard Mullin’s case, the firm is managing the work with its own people, Richardson said.

“But if these surveys continue to multiply, we will have to reassess how to best allocate the resources to handle them.”

Pro Bono Starts at the Top

Ben Hallman

The American Lawyer

07-02-2007

Francis Milone’s conversion was a long time coming.

“Historically, I had always been a busy lawyer,” says the former litigator, who has served as head of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius since 1999. “I billed large hours. But I had not spent any time on pro bono since my early days as an associate. Once I became chair, I began to think about the glue that holds an organization together. I began to think about our obligations as lawyers.”

Those obligations, he decided, went beyond profits. In 2005 he told Morgan Lewis partners at an annual retreat that they must rededicate themselves to pro bono work. He also announced that he would lead by example. Milone took on his first case in many years -- representing a disabled teenager who is suing a public school district outside Philadelphia for better educational opportunities -- and went on the road, preaching the good word about pro bono to lawyers in the firm’s 11 largest American offices. “I found

pent-up demand for attention to this area,” he says.

Since the advent of The A-List in 2003, The American Lawyer has showcased firms that prove a healthy pro bono diet is not an impediment to fat profits. Morgan Lewis is our latest example. The firm jumped 94 spots in our current ranking, to No. 22 from 116 the year before. Morgan Lewis lawyers devoted an average of 67.1 hours to pro bono matters in 2006, a 112 percent increase over 2005, when they averaged 31.7 hours. And the firm didn’t have to take a bath on profits to do it: Revenue per lawyer was \$770,000 in 2006, up 13.2 percent from 2005. Other firms, including Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher; LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae; and Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, also posted impressive year-over-year gains in pro bono without taking a financial hit.

Still, a big move in our pro bono rankings is the exception, not the rule. An analysis of five years of pro bono data shows that most firms move up or down our rankings slowly, by two or three places

each year. A wholesale pro bono revival is fairly rare. Gibson, Dunn; Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy; Shearman & Sterling; and Sonnenschein Nath & Rosenthal are the only firms that have climbed 75 spots or more into the top 20 of our pro bono chart in the five-year period. Other newcomers to the top 20 were already within striking distance, are new to The Am Law 200, or hadn’t supplied their numbers before. Firms in the highest echelon are an especially entrenched bunch -- the top seven firms in 2006 finished in the top 10 in 2002.

Why haven’t more firms vaulted up the charts? One answer is that the bar is higher. In 2006 Am Law 200 firms logged 36 percent more pro bono hours than they did in 2002. More than 34,000 lawyers logged at least 20 pro bono hours, up from more than 24,000 in 2002. All but one of our top 25 pro bono firms for 2006 reported that more than half their lawyers had done at least 20 hours of pro bono work last year. (The lone exception is Howrey, No. 23.) Five years ago, 10 of the top 25 pro bono firms did not

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meet the 20-hour goal.

Interviews with the firms that have made big gains (as well as with a few that have slipped) also suggest that while internal pro bono attitudes can shift incrementally with relative ease, a revolution is much harder to foment. Markedly improving a pro bono ranking is at least as difficult, or at least as rare, as making a big jump in those other measures of success we use to determine our A-List: revenue, associate satisfaction and diversity.

Our five-year review also shows that for a pro bono revolution to stick, it had better begin at the top. That was true at Morgan Lewis, where lawyers, spurred by Milone, devoted an average of 67.1 hours each to pro bono matters in 2006, a 90 percent increase from 2002, when they averaged 35.4 hours. It is also true at DLA Piper, where a long-serving pro bono partner has the ear of co-chairmen Francis Burch Jr., and Lee Miller and has helped the firm nearly double its pro bono average, to 89 hours from 45 hours in pre-merger 2002; and at Hogan & Hartson, another firm that has spent the last five years chipping away at the competition.

"Leadership from the top of the firm is key," says Patricia Brannan, who is in her third year as Hogan's pro bono partner. "Lawyers here get feedback [on pro bono] all the time. It's not just coming from me. It's not like, 'Oh, here comes Pat, get ready for the pro bono speech again.'" At Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, which has finished in the pro bono top 10 for each of the past five years, A. Stephen Hut Jr., vice-chairman of the firm's litigation department, and John Regan, another senior litigation partner, lead the pro bono effort. The two were the first to speak before the assembled partners after their legacy firms merged in 2004, and both say that pro bono at their firm benefits from having high-ranking internal advocates. "Not that it happens often, but if someone wants to take on a case that might engender contention, it helps a lot to have someone engaged in the moneymaking and money-losing aspects of the firm to go to bat for them," Hut says.

Amanda Smith, pro bono counsel at Morgan Lewis, also doesn't have to go begging. She has weekly meetings with Milone, and with his support has instituted firmwide changes. She set up pro bono committees led by a partner in 11 of the 13 offices.

A senior associate was also designated in each of the 11 offices to spend at least 10 percent of his or her time coordinating pro bono matters. Meanwhile, she keeps up the pressure: Morgan Lewis lawyers get a monthly newsletter that spotlights particular pro bono matters and lists the name of each lawyer who has met the 20-hour threshold set by the firm. "It's more carrot than stick," she says, but the message is clear. Pro bono is no longer a sign of professional virtue; it is an expectation of firm management.

Those firms that have seen a big change in their pro bono hours tend to have recently hired someone like Smith, a full-time director empowered by management to make sure the rank and file takes pro bono seriously. Scot Fishman at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae also fits this description. A former LeBoeuf litigation associate, he was hired in July 2006 as the firm's first full-time manager of corporate social responsibility. Fishman quickly established relationships with several big not-for-profits, including the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and brought dozens of cases to LeBoeuf lawyers. For the first two quarters of 2006, the firm averaged about 6,000 hours of pro bono; in the fourth, lawyers did more than 11,000 hours.

Hoping to rejoin the group of coordinators who have helped turn a firm's pro bono practice around is Steven Schulman, former pro bono counsel at Latham & Watkins, which revitalized its pro bono program in the '90s. At his new firm, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, Schulman has his work cut out for him. Akin Gump fell to 100th place in 2006, from 50th in 2005. Schulman says a lack of focus on pro bono, due to a long transition period when the firm was without a coordinator until his hire last August, is partly to blame. The firm also had a busy year with paying clients, he says (revenue per lawyer was up 7.7 percent in 2006, thanks in part to a \$58.5 million contingency fee payout).

Like his counterparts elsewhere, Schulman says that top-down leadership is vital: "It's important that they not just say the words, but that they take a personal commitment. Then I can say, 'Hey, Bruce [McLean, the firm's chairman] is doing this, what is your excuse?' He's the busiest guy in the firm." (McLean participates in a firmwide project providing legal counsel to immi-

grant women filing for permanent residency under the federal Violence Against Women Act.) Schulman guarantees that Akin Gump will move back up the charts for 2007.

Morgan Lewis; Hogan & Hartson; and LeBoeuf Lamb acknowledge that their recent ascension to the upper tier of pro bono contributors is due to big initiatives they have undertaken. At other firms pro bono successes are less revolution than evolution. Elizabeth Dewey has been pro bono partner at DLA Piper since 1999 (she started at predecessor firm Piper & Marbury). "Part of our firm's culture and history has been the support from the very top for pro bono," she says. DLA lawyers hear a lot about pro bono. Each is asked to devote 60 hours a year (20 hours is the minimum). They are asked about pro bono on their annual self-assessment. And associates receive credit toward their yearly billing targets for up to 100 hours of pro bono work, with exceptions allowed for cases that demand more time. (Hogan also caps hours that associates can be reimbursed for pro bono work at 100, but Morgan Lewis has left the door open -- associates get credit for every hour they work on pro bono, with no ceiling.)

Akin Gump's year-to-year decline was startling for its abruptness; other firms are on a slow fade. In 2002 an average of 88.7 hours per lawyer was enough to earn Cravath, Swaine & Moore the No. 13 slot on our pro bono charts. In 2006 Cravath lawyers averaged 75 hours. Percentage-wise, this is a modest decline, but with the rest of The Am Law 200 putting in more time, Cravath slid to 43rd place. Morrison & Foerster has also fallen behind. Lawyers at the firm averaged 76 hours of pro bono time in 2006. But that's down from the 126 hours they averaged in 2002. Morrison Chairman Keith Wetmore explains the flux as part of the natural ebb and flow of legal work. In 2002, he notes, the firm's lawyers devoted 75,000 hours to a class action in which San Francisco students sued the state of California, claiming substandard access to educational resources. "The good news is that all the firms are doing more," Wetmore says. "We see ourselves as a trailblazer."

Morrison and Cravath still finished 2006 in the top third of pro bono firms, and they also fared well when we compared

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them to other firms in the top 50 for revenue per lawyer. This was a useful exercise because it shows that there is no apparent conflict between financial success and pro bono work. Of the top 50 firms ranked by revenue per lawyer, 24 finished 2006 in the top 50 of our pro bono rankings, and 16 more finished in the top 100. (Nineteen Am Law 200 firms would not disclose their pro bono hours this year, including two in the top 50: Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, which is traditionally tight-lipped about its pro bono work, and Williams & Connolly.)

The firms in the bottom 100 of our rankings offer varying explanations for the results. Quinn Emanuel Urquhart Oliver & Hedges (revenue per lawyer rank 17, pro bono rank 141) notes that it does volunteer work that doesn't count in our rankings, such as teaching reading to inner-city children. Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner (revenue per lawyer rank 26, pro bono rank 153) and Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft (revenue per lawyer rank 20, pro bono rank 135) both say that they are improving their pro bono efforts. At Fish & Richardson (revenue per lawyer rank 59, pro bono rank 182), managing

partner Peter Devlin acknowledges that his firm lags behind its peers. "We excel in lots of areas, but pro bono is not one of them," he says. The firm averaged five hours of pro bono per lawyer in 2006; put another way, it collected \$168,000 in revenue for every hour it devoted to pro bono. In contrast, Wilmer, a perennial pro bono all-star, collected an average of \$8,041 for every pro bono hour.

Lawrence Kolodney, whom Fish & Richardson hired as pro bono coordinator last fall, says he has a tough assignment. "In firms with an ingrained pro bono culture, every generation of lawyers follows in the footsteps of prior generations," he says. In an attempt to turn the tide, Kolodney is trying some of the tactics of other successful firms: building partnerships with nonprofits, meeting with associates, setting goals.

These firms say they expect to do more in the future, but radical changes in firm culture are difficult, says Wilmer's Hut. Firms at the top of the pro bono rankings have a "long-standing institutional commitment that tends to replenish itself," he says. Given that, Fish & Richardson might be able to climb out of the pro bono basement, but the penthouse is probably out of reach

-- unless, perhaps, the leadership gets religion.

Milone hadn't taken a case in nearly 10 years, when he became attorney of record for the Philadelphia boy who has epilepsy and a mental disability. He acknowledges that his role is mostly that of a supervisor -- two associates do most of the legwork -- but he has spent at least 100 hours working with them on the case during the last two years. That, he feels, is special. "I get a sense of accomplishment that I don't get from managing a law firm," he says. "You can take a life and literally change it." And if it makes your firm look better in the eyes of competitors and potential recruits? So much the better.

The American Lawyer's annual report on the state of pro bono work in the nation's largest law firms, The 2007 Pro Bono Survey ranks Am Law 200 firms based on the amount of pro bono work performed by each firm. Included are the average number of pro bono hours per lawyer and the percentage of lawyers with more than 20 hours of pro bono work.

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