

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers — 2009

Fourteen attorneys—selected for their acumen in developing books of business, as well as their expertise as lawyers—share their experiences and personal pathways to success.

By Patrick Folliard

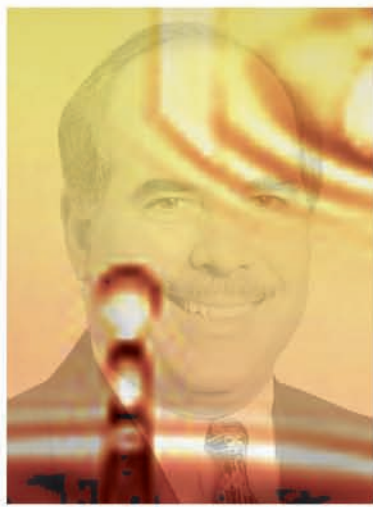
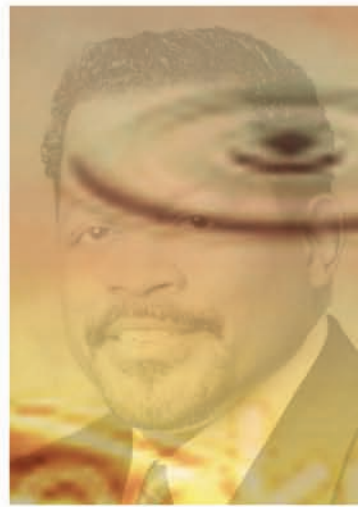
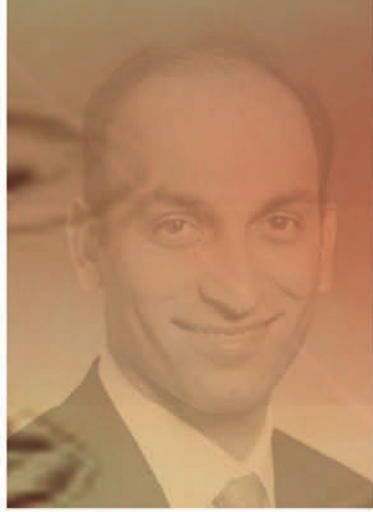
The idea of the rainmaker as a schmoozing, country-club denizen is increasingly dismissed as a long-gone phenomenon by most working attorneys. Socializing remains an ingredient in building a healthy book of business; nevertheless, today's minority rainmakers credit a nose-to-the grindstone work ethic as the key to achieving demonstrated success in business development. They advise investment in relationship-building, client service, and perfecting substantive legal skills as the means to ensuring very good returns.

For *Diversity & the Bar's* third rainmaker feature, fourteen attorneys share tips on not only how to bring in new clients, but also how to keep them. Because today's economic climate presents challenges that most of these leaders have heretofore not encountered, many are learning for the first time to be "more creative about fee proposals." In order to secure business, rainmakers must deliver on promises to be efficient and cost effective; otherwise, they will surely lose longtime clients to the competition. Those whose practice areas include regulation, restructuring, and/or bankruptcy noted they

are busier than ever, citing the current challenges as a boon for their business area.

These rainmakers were selected from a pool of nominees suggested by leading firms from across the country. Each attorney maintains a regular book of business reaching or exceeding \$2 million a year. In making its selections, MCCA weighed the attorneys' geographic locations and practice areas, as well as their gender and ethnicity, in order to present the most diverse and well-rounded group possible.

Like previous years, many of our rainmakers were the first in their families to attend college or graduate school; one interviewee was the first in his family to graduate from high school. And, as in the case of new Supreme Court Justice Sonya Sotomayor, many of those interviewed were initially drawn to the law by TV's *Perry Mason*. It seems that the fictional criminal defense attorney with the stellar record was the inspiration that set many a diverse young rainmaker on his or her ambitious career path.



Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

Juanita Brooks

Partner

Fish & Richardson
San Diego, CA

Years Practicing: 33

Area of Practice:

IP Litigation



After practicing at Federal Defenders, Inc., of San Diego for three years, Juanita Brooks hung out her own shingle in 1980. “I was a young attorney and had to learn about business development very quickly,” she remembers. “Almost overnight, I was rainmaker, office manager, head litigator — everything. Essentially, I generated business by getting as much exposure as possible.”

Today, Brooks is a principal in Fish & Richardson’s San Diego office, where she has a nationwide trial practice specializing in complex intellectual property litigation. Over the years her practice has changed, but Brooks attests that, for her, the basic tenets of rainmaking have remained the same: “It’s still important to keep your name out there. [Once,] after a long trial, I noticed that my book of business had shrunk considerably. I had to get out there and start over again.”

Raised primarily by a single mother near Riverside, California, Brooks was inspired to succeed by her teachers; a professor at San Diego State University encouraged her to apply to law school and “aim high.” Just months prior to being accepted at Yale Law School, she was unclear exactly where it was located. A mere decade later, Brooks would successfully represent John DeLorean in the U.S. government’s cases against him.

“My advice to young women attorneys who aspire to be rainmakers is to ‘toot your own horn,’” shares Brooks. “As girls, we were taught not to push too hard, and as women we assume that people should know our capabilities without our telling them. It doesn’t work that way. Like it or not, we have to sell ourselves.”

James S. Carr

Partner

Kelley Drye & Warren LLP
New York, NY

Years Practicing: 22

Area of Practice:

Bankruptcy and Restructuring



As chair of the bankruptcy and restructuring practice group at Kelley Drye, James Carr generates a lot of bankruptcy business, and a lot of non-bankruptcy business as well. He is also a member of the firm’s management committee. “My rainmaking approach involves common sense, understanding my client’s business needs, and being responsive,” he shares.

While studying law at Notre Dame, Carr never imagined he would one day be a rainmaker at a big New York law firm. He says, “I could see myself becoming a successful lawyer. The thing was, at that time, I didn’t know how to define success.” Once in the profession, Carr soon understood that generating business was the path to controlling his destiny. As a young associate, he nurtured relationships with credit managers and analysts, and began giving bankruptcy and creditors’ rights seminars. Before long, he was bringing in business.

Kelley Drye’s Park Avenue office is less than a mile from where Carr lived as a small kid, in the then-very rough Hell’s Kitchen section of Manhattan. Born into what he describes as “a dysfunctional family,” Carr went to live with more-stable cousins in northern New Jersey when he was nine. From there he mapped out a life plan based on hard work and fueled by ambition: “It’s imperative not to lose my edge.”

For the foreseeable future, Carr wants to grow his bankruptcy department into one of the best practices for creditors’ rights in the country. “Goals are good,” notes Carr. “If you don’t set goals, you’ll never know what you might attain.”

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

Yolanda Chavez Knull

Partner

Vinson & Elkins
Houston, TX

Years Practicing: 30

Area of Practice:

Estate Planning



“Traditional avenues of business development don’t really work in my practice,” explains Yolanda Chavez Knull, an estate planning partner in Vinson & Elkins’ Houston office, where she counts some of Texas’ highest net-worth individuals among her clients. “They’re not interested in legal seminars or being ‘wined and dined.’ How do you take the owner of the team to a ballgame? For me, reputation and word-of-mouth recommendation are the keys to generating new business.”

Born in Los Angeles but raised in Mexico since she was an infant, Chavez Knull returned to the U.S. as a college student. She graduated from Vassar College and the New York University Law School. “Being bicultural has helped my career,” she explains. “Not only with my Mexican clients, but also with Europeans, Asians, whomever — I’m uniquely prepared to help them, as I understand that there’s more than one way of doing things.”

In addition to domestic and international wealth management for individuals and families, Chavez Knull’s practice provides services for large charitable organizations and private foundations. Her concentration also includes an administrative practice before the IRS.

“Estate planners are tax lawyers,” confides Chavez Knull. “And like all tax lawyers, we are extremely detail-oriented. But to succeed in this practice, you must also be empathetic and willing to listen to your clients; after all, taxes are sometimes tangential to what is happening within a family. Qualities like ‘detail-oriented’ and ‘good with people’ don’t always go together, but in estate planning, they’re essential.”

Michael Diaz Jr.

Managing Partner

Diaz Reus & Targ, LLP
Miami, FL

Years Practicing: 23

Area of Practice:

Business Litigation



As founding and managing partner at Diaz Reus & Targ, Michael Diaz advises young minority attorneys to never ignore their diversity. “It’s your strength; embrace it,” he counsels. “It’s the best opportunity to demonstrate that you’re equal to or better than the competition. If someone places an obstacle in your path, figure out a way around it.”

Diaz, who served as an Assistant State Attorney in the Miami-Dade Office of the State Attorney from 1986 to 1990 under Janet Reno, left government service in March of 1990 to go into private practice. “I’ve never had a problem generating business,” reflects the Cuban American attorney. “I’ve been lucky; early in my career I had the ability, and was given the opportunity, to learn from others. Today, I pass those skills on to our junior attorneys.”

Diaz’s practice focuses on domestic and international litigation and arbitration of complex commercial disputes and regulatory investigations. “At the firm, our aim is to provide first-rate services at cost-effective rates,” he shares. “It’s how we’ve always competed with the larger firms. That, combined with a diverse team of attorneys who are able to instill confidence and do the work, has garnered us business in the U.S. and abroad.”

Although being a rainmaker is not a requirement at Diaz Reus, it is a skill Diaz and his partners preach to younger lawyers and practice themselves. Success, he asserts, also depends upon attorneys knowing how to market themselves and the firm.

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

John Flock

Partner

Kenyon & Kenyon LLP
New York, NY

Years Practicing: 29

Area of Practice:

IL Litigation



Partners at Kenyon & Kenyon do not need to be rainmakers, notes John Flock, a member of the firm's executive committee. "We have terrific attorneys who have been with us for years and do not have a primary role in business development," he explains. "Instead, they play a critical role in representing clients that other attorneys have brought in or nurtured. Our patent cases are big and require a team with a wide range of skill sets and experience."

Flock, who in fact does bring in a lot of business, shares that his "approach to business development is to make sure potential clients understand that my interest is in relationship-building and not short-term profits. I think of myself as part of a practice building team that helps Kenyon to continue its 130-year history."

"At Kenyon, we only do IP," continues Flock, an experienced trial lawyer with nine years of service as an assistant district attorney in New York City. "And because we're not huge, we're a nimble firm. When we want to do something, we make a quick decision. We don't have a lot of competing interests from different practice groups."

Flock was born in Manhattan's Chinatown and grew up mostly in Flushing, Queens. He remembers his Chinese immigrant father working long hours, seven days a week, at various laundry and restaurant jobs. "My father rarely had time to sleep," recalls Flock. "While my parents knew nothing about education or being professionals, their capacity for hard work made them very real role models for me."

Franca Harris Gutierrez

Partner

WilmerHale Pickering Hale and
Dorr LLP

Washington, DC

Years Practicing: 15

Area of Practice:

Financial Institutions



Arainmaking partner in WilmerHale's regulatory and government affairs department and a member of the financial institutions practice group, Franca Harris Gutierrez credits the contributions of very capable colleagues for freeing her to generate business. "Without them, I'd be quite limited on what I could do," she points out. "A supportive structure for handling projects is critical, especially in a smaller group."

Prior to joining WilmerHale's Washington, D.C., office, Gutierrez was an attorney in the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, a bureau of the Treasury Department, where she was part of the chief counsel's office. "The relationships I formed in my years as a regulator have been invaluable in my practice," explains the Columbia Law School graduate. "My work is largely self-generated; I feel an obligation to bring business to the group."

Much of Gutierrez's success hinges on the depth of her relationships with clients. "I keep things very current; if any issues cross my plate concerning clients, they hear about it quickly," she explains. "Some clients become personal, as well as professional, friends, resulting in deeper relationships. And while tough calls can become that much tougher, that have significant impact on their business, I don't pull any punches – and it is doubly satisfying to share in their successes."

"I'm very direct with my clients, and I think they respect me for that," she continues. "Particularly in a regulatory practice, clients must know where the lines are. If there's room, we'll try to rethink their posture; but if not, and it's time to settle or reverse course of action, it's imperative to be candid about that."

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

Wab P. Kadaba

Partner

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP
Atlanta, GA

Years Practicing: 12

Area of Practice:
Intellectual Property



Over the past few years, Kilpatrick Stockton has experienced a proliferation of patent litigation, reports Wab Kadaba. “Kilpatrick’s good reputation in the east began to pick up nationally,” he asserts, “and soon it became a situation where clients began to seek us out affirmatively. That’s a very good place to be.”

Kadaba’s broad patent practice includes litigation, client counseling/strategizing, and overseeing large patent portfolios for several corporations. He has been busy during this time of growth developing his network, relentlessly pursuing opportunities, and nurturing long-term contacts that sometimes turn into clients.

A Georgia native whose parents were born in India, Kadaba first thought of law school while earning an MS in mechanical engineering. He realized then a lurking desire to combine his technical education with a profession involving client service. After some consideration, he decided on patent law. It seemed a good fit. So, rather than pursue a Ph.D. and become an engineering professor like his father, Kadaba went on to the University of North Carolina School of Law, entered the legal profession, and never looked back.

“Rainmaking requires patience,” reflects Kadaba. “Nine years ago I became involved with the State of Georgia Bar Association. Recently, that activity culminated with my being chair for the IP section of the bar. That’s the type of thing that gets your name out there and brings you new clients. Business development doesn’t bear fruit overnight; it takes time.”

Eric A. Kuwana

Partner

Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP
Washington, D.C.

Years Practicing: 18

Area of Practice:
Litigation



“For a litigator, the most important thing is to do good work,” asserts Eric A. Kuwana, a litigation partner in Katten Muchin Rosenman’s Washington, D.C., office. “We want to be known for getting results and winning cases, and for being good trial lawyers who can try cases in different courts across the country. Without these things, a young litigator will never be given the opportunities to rise to rainmaker.

“After hard work, [success depends on] building relationships and the service area of our work,” continues Kuwana, who represents clients in high-profile disputes in federal and state courts. “Living clients’ problems, and letting them know we’re there for them, goes a long way. Lawyers, particularly in large departments, sometimes forget about that.”

After earning a BA in economics at the University of Chicago, Kuwana intended to pursue a career on Wall Street, but the economic downturn following the crash of 1987 prompted him to do otherwise. A career in law struck the young Ohio native as a reasonable alternative to finance, so he went on to University of Kansas School of Law.

At Katten, Kuwana is national deputy chairman of the litigation practice and a member of the firm’s board of directors. “If you want to help guide how your firm operates and how your practice area grows and develops, you have to be willing to commit time to help with that,” he advises. “A lot of successful, busy partners don’t opt to deal with management and training associates, but I’m a big believer in putting in time to improve the firm, other practices, and the next generation of litigators.”

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

Dwayne L. Mason

Partner

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP

Houston, TX

Years Practicing: 16

Area of Practice:

Intellectual Property



Dwayne L. Mason traces the beginning of his ascent to rainmaker back to his undergraduate days at Purdue University, where he majored in chemical engineering. “I established long-term relationships with people I met at the engineering and business schools in college,” he recalls. “It continued after I graduated and began working as an engineer. Ultimately I called on those relationships as my entrée to do legal work as a young IP lawyer.”

Mason’s practice focuses on intellectual property and commercial litigation, focusing on assisting companies in the protection and commercialization of intellectual property. “Developing business is essential to what makes a partnership work,” he explains. “The expectation is that each partner pulls his or her own weight. Some partners primarily service existing clients. That’s not my case; I go out and find clients.”

He advises young associates foremost to do exceptional work and develop relationships within the firm; in other words, to become team players. From there, he attests, they will be positioned to move on opportunities and prove themselves.

After graduating from the University of Houston Law Center, Mason was hired by a boutique IP litigation firm in Houston, where he made partner. He joined Akin Gump nine years ago, seeking a platform more conducive to his client base and the practice upon which he wished to expand. Until last year, Mason managed Akin Gump’s global IP section. He currently serves on the firm’s management committee, and is chair of firm-wide diversity.

J. Michael Martinez de Andino

Partner

Hunton & Williams LLP

Richmond, VA

Years Practicing: 18

Area of Practice:

Litigation and Intellectual Property



When J. Michael Martinez de Andino joined Hunton & Williams in 2000, he was the sole IP person in the firm’s Richmond office. Now, the firm’s Richmond office has three IP partners and seven associates, with plans for hiring additional attorneys in the not-too-distant future. The firm as a whole has seventy-five dedicated IP practitioners.

In describing the growth of the practice, Martinez de Andino shares that “business development has undeniably played a key role.” His practice concentrates on the acquisition and enforcement of intellectual property rights, with an emphasis on patents in e-commerce, computer software, and telecommunications. “Not only do I go outside for clients, but I look within the firm as well,” he explains. “From the start, it’s important for attorneys to sell themselves to the firm’s partners and co-associates, and to be responsive. If you’re there when they call you the first time, chances are they’ll call again.”

For Martinez de Andino, business development is a job requirement. Fortunately, many of the skills required come easily to him. “Work doesn’t come to you; you have to get out there, make presentations, socialize, and meet people,” he notes. “My father was in the military, so growing up I bounced around every three years. Starting over all the time forced me to reach out to people — both those I was leaving behind and the new ones I was getting to know. My life experience has definitely helped in terms of my seeking out and retaining clients.”

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

Anup Sathy

Partner

Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Chicago

Years Practicing: 15

Area of Practice:

Restructuring



A restructuring partner in Kirkland & Ellis' Chicago office, Anup Sathy chalks his rainmaker status up to hard work and being available to clients whenever they need him. "In many ways, I view myself as an ER doctor," he reflects. "When clients call, particularly in my practice area, they're invariably experiencing some distress and need help right away. I need to be there to assist them."

Sathy's practice focuses on matters relating to corporate restructurings, workouts, and Chapter 11 reorganizations. Typically, he represents large companies and boards of directors in financially stressed situations. When Sathy's department is successful in helping companies solve their problems, those companies ordinarily do not become repeat clients – a departure from the norm in other practice areas. For that reason, restructuring attorneys thrive on referrals and recommendations to generate new business; Sathy well understands the importance of ensuring that each client receives top-notch service.

During his 12 years at Kirkland & Ellis, Sathy has watched the number of restructuring attorneys grow from just a handful to 100 firm-wide. In his words, that growth "is the result of a lot of hard work and the desire to create something bigger. The lawyers in our department are invested. We see ourselves as owners of our group."

For Sathy's department, the last couple of years have been very busy. "In the current economic climate," the Chicago-born attorney explains, "a lot of people have tried to refashion themselves as restructuring professionals. Fortunately, because of our hard-earned reputation for providing high-quality service in that area, we've retained a significant share of the market."

Alphonso E. Tindall Jr.

Partner

Edwards Angell Palmer &
Dodge LLP
New York, NY

Years Practicing: 30

Area of Practice:

Public Finance



When he began practicing thirty years ago, things were different, according to Alphonso E. Tindall Jr., a public finance partner in Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge's Manhattan office. "If an African American attorney wanted make partner at a firm he had to be rainmaker; there was no other way to move up the ladder of success," he recalls. "I wanted to make it, so I became a rainmaker."

In his estimation, the best lawyers are those who identify, understand and are responsive to the needs of their clients. There is no substitution for knowledge and top-notch service, notes Tindall, whose public finance practice concentrates on the issuance of public debt obligations by municipal, state, and state-authority issuers, as well as the funding of infrastructure projects in emerging markets. His practice also encompasses drafting public finance legislation at the municipal, state, federal, and international levels.

Tindall remembers clearly the hurdles he faced during his second year of law school at the University of Connecticut. "I was interviewing for summer jobs and had been called back for second interviews by five firms, but couldn't seem to finally get hired," he shares. "The last to call me back was one of the premier Wall Street finance firms in the country. A lawyer friend suggested that I not get my hopes up. Turns out the firm hired me and, by the end of the summer, offered me a job. Seven years later, I made partner, the first African American partner in that firm's history."

As Tindall advises, "to become a trusted counselor, you have to first know your clients' business in context of their corporations, and the industries in which they operate."

Leading Law Firm Rainmakers

Larry L. Turner

Partner

Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP
Philadelphia, PA

Years Practicing: 25

Area of Practice:
Employment and Labor



Larry L. Turner considers himself more “problem-solver” than rainmaker. An employment and labor partner in Morgan Lewis’ Philadelphia office, Turner does bring in a lot of business, but he would rather comment on being a team player than on his success in business development. “At the end of the day, I want to know that clients are pleased with our service,” he asserts. “Much of my success is [in] providing a platform from which I can help others.”

When pressed to reveal his rainmaker recipe, Turner relents. “Nurturing relationships and problem-solving are the two pillars upon which I built my practice,” he explains. “It’s also essential to perfect your craft, whatever you designate that to be. Be a sponge where knowledge is concerned. You never know when something you’ve learned might help your client.”

Long before attending Georgetown University Law Center, Turner knew for certain that he wanted to become a trial lawyer. He set his sights on the legal profession while watching episodes of Perry Mason as young boy in rural North Carolina.

The first in his family to pursue higher education, Turner recalls aspects of his youth with gratitude. “The sacrifices my parents made so I could succeed, and the amount of energy the community invested in instilling a ‘can-do’ attitude in me, is amazing,” he reflects, adding, “I do what I can to pass this kind of support on to younger people in the community and the workplace.”

Vickie E. Turner

Partner

Wilson Turner Kosmo LLP
San Diego, CA

Years Practicing: 27

Area of Practice:
Litigation



When Vickie E. Turner advises young attorneys on how to follow in her rainmaker footsteps, she inevitably leads with the exhortation, “Don’t be invisible!” Turner believes that business often has a way of finding a good lawyer, but sometimes that process needs a little help.

“You never know where business is going to come from,” notes Turner, whose practice focuses on defending litigation against corporations, with emphasis in liability related to products liability and class action.

“I tell young attorneys — women and minorities in particular — to get involved in specialty bars. If there’s something unique about you or a personal passion, get involved. It’s there where you will shine, and others will be attracted to you for development purposes.”

A self-described “Air Force brat,” Turner grew up all over the country. Eventually, her family settled in Las Vegas, where she earned an accounting degree. After a single tax season, however, Turner realized that adding numbers was not for her, so she went on to law school at University of San Diego School of Law. From the start, she recalls, she knew law was something she could do and enjoy.

To be a rainmaker, explains Turner, requires an entrepreneurial spirit; it also helps to be outgoing and to have a sense of salesmanship. For some, it comes naturally, but for others, it must be learned. “I used to be less direct about marketing,” shares Turner, “but I improved by watching those who were already really good — and by doing.” **DB**