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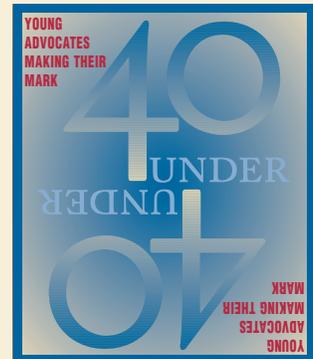
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MONDAY, MAY 2, 2005

Young lawyers chalk up impressive achievements and exert influence

FORTY ATTORNEYS were culled from nominations The National Law Journal received from readers, the advice of legal associations and our own research on lawyers who would still be under 40 by May 2, our publication date. Though in no way comprehensive, the list attempts to identify 40 of the leading young attorneys in various areas of law across the country who, we expect, will continue to exert influence in the legal profession. We looked for evidence of extraordinary achievements early on in their careers. We attempted to balance the picks geographically, though inevitably many work in New York and Washington, two epicenters of the national legal community. One noticeable trend in the latest crop of legal talent is the resurgence of mergers and acquisitions; a handful of the 40 have played a role in billion-dollar deals over the past few years. Several young attorneys have argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, **one is dean of a top-tier law school** and another is attorney general of her state. The achievements of these young lawyers are indeed impressive.



DAVID SCHIZER, 36

He's the youngest dean ever at Columbia

FOR THE COLUMBIA Law Revue's Spring Show this year, a student play called *Suddenly Schizer*, the playbill featured Superman with the face of David Schizer.

Schizer, 36, is the youngest dean ever at Columbia Law School—and his popularity is evident.

Schizer's course on tax law became one of the most popular classes in the law school when he taught it.

He was granted a tenured professorship at Columbia Law at the age of 33, and was chosen as the new dean of the law school in June 2004, at age 35.

As dean and the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Law, he continues to teach. His current class on deals epitomizes the changes that Schizer envisions for Columbia Law, focusing on realistic legal issues rather than theory alone.

"We're trying to innovate the traditional model of legal education," he said. "Implicitly, [law schools] are training [students] to be appellate litigators, and that's not the context that many graduates end up in. Many end up in leadership positions on sophisticated transactions. So, how do you train people for the very upper-tier transactions?"

"I tell my students, 'That's fine in theory, but how does it work in the real world? You can't build an ivory tower in Manhattan because the skyscrapers block the view,'" he continued.

For the course, Schizer has brought in professional corporate transaction lawyers,

and Columbia business students to work with law students.

"We are a place that engages with the world, not theory for its own sake," Schizer said. "We're at our best when we're bringing students, top academics and practitioners together."

Schizer envisions Columbia Law lowering its faculty-to-student ratio during his tenure, and creating special teaching chairs that faculty could apply for, allowing them to spend a year trying out new and, it is to be hoped, innovative, courses to teach.

"It would allow members of the faculty to spend a semester developing something that doesn't exist in the legal academy," Schizer said. "The goal is to harness the talent of the faculty."

But it wasn't always clear to him that he wanted to work in academia.

"When I was clerking for Justice [Ruth Bader] Ginsburg, I asked for her advice [on a legal career], and she is very careful about not influencing people too much. The answer she gave me is 'You should do what you want to do.' So I said, 'Justice, what do you think I would want to do?' And she said, 'Well, have you talked to Marty [her husband, also a lawyer] about tax?' So I did, I talked to Marty and found that I did love it."

Schizer worked as an associate at Davis Polk & Wardwell of New York for three years, doing mainly tax work, when he got a call from Columbia Law School. It was looking for



DUSTIN ROSS

someone to teach tax law, and Ginsburg's daughter, a professor at Columbia, had suggested Schizer. He answered no, then picked up the phone and called back.

"They said, 'If you want to be on the faculty, you have to do some research before we hire you.' I said no, I was already working 70 hours a week. But the no just didn't work well with me, and I started thinking about various things I'd like to explore [as a professor]," Schizer said.

He got hooked on the idea of writing a paper, and began his research, refining it in the hours between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m.

"I agonized a bit because I was so happy at Davis Polk, but I figured I'd try it for a bit. It was just such a wonderful fit for me."

BY LINDSAY FORTADO