

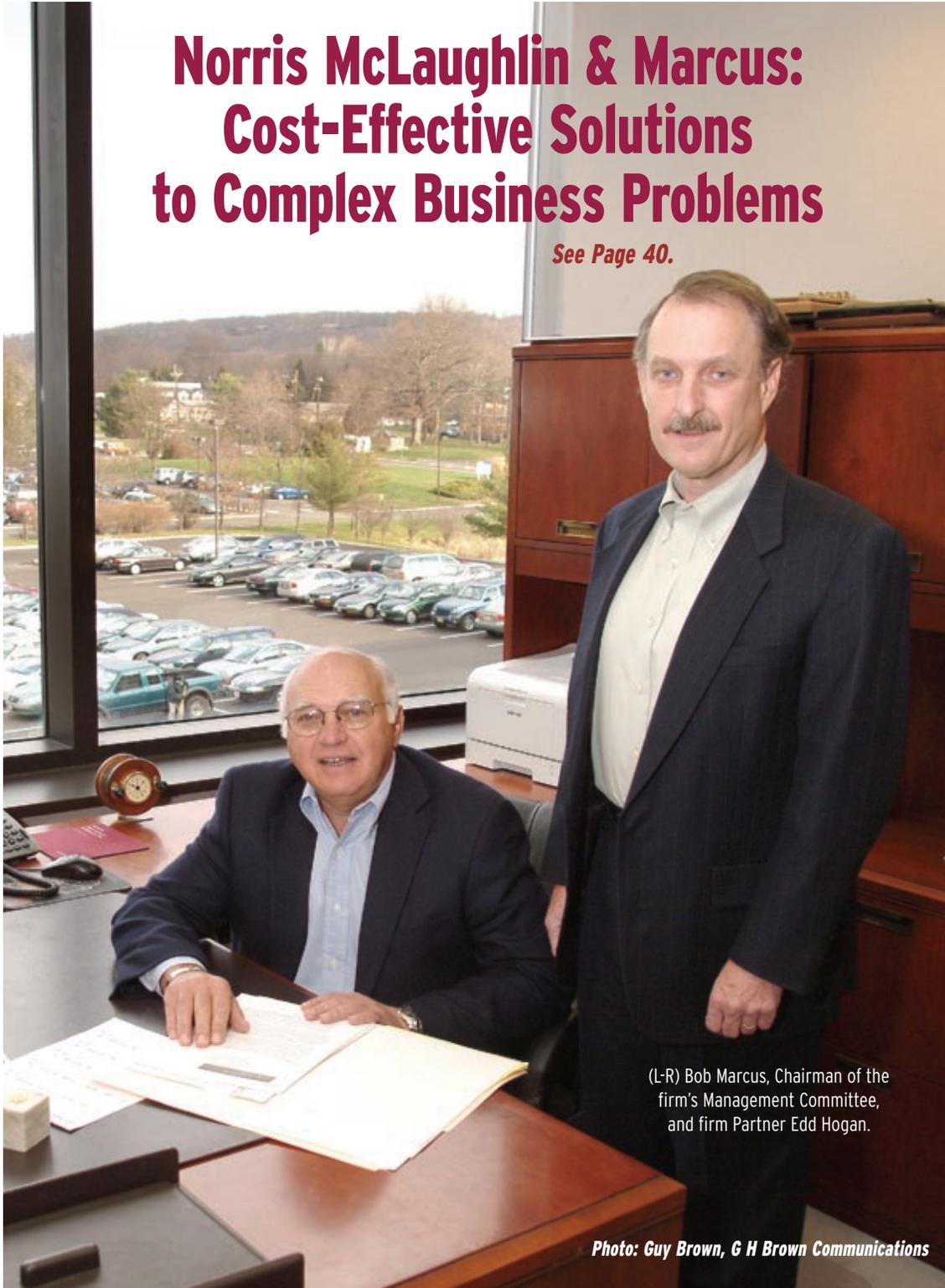
COMMERCE

THE BUSINESS OF NEW JERSEY

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Norris McLaughlin & Marcus: Cost-Effective Solutions to Complex Business Problems

See Page 40.



(L-R) Bob Marcus, Chairman of the firm's Management Committee, and firm Partner Edd Hogan.

Photo: Guy Brown, G H Brown Communications

Special Sections:

- Executive Education
- Black History Month
- Women of Influence
- Pediatric Care

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Inside:



A Novel Conversation With
Mary & Carol Higgins Clark



NFL Legend Harry Carson
On Leadership & Winning



Bounty Hunting's Top Dog:
Duane "Dog" Chapman



Bob Watson's Success Is
A Win For MLB & America

A photograph of two men in dark suits and light-colored shirts standing in a library. The man on the left is older, with white hair and glasses, looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right has a mustache and is smiling while holding an open book. They are both looking at the book. The background shows shelves filled with books.

Norris McLaughlin & Marcus: Cost-Effective Solutions to Complex Business Problems

(L-R) Bob Marcus, Chairman of the firm's Management Committee, and firm Partner Edd Hogan.

COVER STORY

ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED LAW FIRMS in New Jersey, Norris McLaughlin & Marcus has provided high-quality legal services to the business community since 1953 with clients ranging from multinational corporations and *Fortune 500* companies to small businesses and start-up enterprises. The award-winning firm and its 100 attorneys—many of whom are leaders in legal, business and charitable organizations—has built a reputation for offering cost-effective solutions to complex business problems on a local, state, national and even global scale.

COMMERCE magazine recently interviewed G. Robert Marcus, Chairman of the firm's Management Committee, to learn more about how Norris McLaughlin & Marcus works with businesses. Marcus concentrates his practice on corporate transactions and tax matters and has over 35 years of experience counseling pharmaceutical, medical device and other technology-oriented clients on a broad range of corporate and tax issues including corporate reorganizations, license agreements, and distribution and supply arrangements. In addition, he has played a leading role in many mergers and acquisitions, as well as in a variety of corporate partnerships and joint ventures. Marcus is included in the Corporate Law section of the current issue of *The Best Lawyers in America*.

COMMERCE: *Our audience may be surprised to know that Norris McLaughlin & Marcus is one of the fastest growing firms in New Jersey, and the largest in the tri-county area of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren. How has the firm been able to achieve this growth and success?*

BOB MARCUS: The firm was founded more than 50 years ago by Art Meredith and Dick Norris in Somerville, which at the time was a small town surrounded by horse country. It began as a general practice that represented some of the area's local businesses and individuals.

When I joined the firm in 1972, the legal landscape in central New Jersey had begun to change, and for the first time, companies needed legal services outside the established legal hubs of Newark and Trenton. Somerset County began to attract companies in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries and in high-tech industries such as software development and biotechnology. Our strategy was to attract lawyers who had the skills and expertise to serve these clients.

Somerset County also became an attractive location for foreign companies looking for a base in the United States. We acquired lawyers with immigration, foreign tax and patent expertise to serve these clients as well. In 1997, we opened our New York office to better serve our roster of international clients. Our strategy of acquir-

ing or developing expertise to serve the anticipated needs of corporations in Central New Jersey has helped us grow to over 100 attorneys.

Q. *What exactly is your culture, and how did it lead to your firm being chosen as one of the "Best Places to Work in New Jersey" for 2006?*

A. I believe we were chosen for this honor because of the firm's ability to balance high-quality legal services with a family life outside of the office. Many of us began our legal careers in firms where the work demands left no time for a quality family life. When our firm started to expand in the 1970s, we began to focus on finding the balance between high-quality legal services and client service, and the desire for a life outside the office. We require 1,800 billable hours per year, as opposed to comparable firms that require in excess of 2,000 hours per year.

We also have a professional development program at the firm for attorneys and staff. They have access to full-service administrative support including a wide variety of professional development and technical training. This training helps to enhance their legal knowledge, keeps them up-to-date on recent legislation and supports business development efforts. For example, our firm's marketing department is instrumental in assisting our attorneys to better serve their clients by providing value-added services such as free educational programs, relationship-building events, and help in creating business opportunities for the client.

Because we like to maintain a family-oriented atmosphere, the firm also works hard to provide opportunities for attorneys and staff to develop interpersonal relationships. Internal socials and firm-wide events allow additional time for employees to get to know each other and their families on a personal level. The firm also encourages attorneys and staff to utilize their unique abilities and personalities, and takes time to celebrate personal accomplishments.

Lastly, we feel that the location of our main office, roughly half-way between New York City and Philadelphia, is ideal for those attorneys who wish to work in a high-profile firm without the stress of city life. It is also a wonderful place to raise a family, an idyllic setting for outdoor recreation, and it is within a short drive of several high-quality arts and cultural venues.

Q. *How does the combination of growth and success and a favorable work environment lead to a positive outcome for your clients?*

A. This combination has allowed us to develop sophisticated practice groups consisting of high-quality lawyers who work well together and understand our client

continued on page 42

continued from page 41

service model. The qualities that our clients look for are the same qualities that our attorneys exhibit on a day-to-day basis. We reinforce our client service model and our internal culture on a regular basis. Attorneys understand the firm's expectations and they translate those expectations into client satisfaction.

Q. *What practice areas of law does Norris McLaughlin handle or specialize in?*

A. Norris McLaughlin & Marcus is a full-service commercial law firm, although we have developed spe-

cific industry niches within each of our 30 practice areas. Because the firm is situated in the nation's life sciences corridor, we do work for many pharmaceutical, medical device, healthcare, biotechnology and related consumer products companies in the area. Our life sciences client roster includes companies such as Enzon Pharmaceuticals, sanofi-aventis, Johnson & Johnson, Bayer, Pfizer Inc, GE Healthcare, Ventiv Health, Inc. and New Brunswick Scientific.

Various practice groups at the firm work together to assist these companies with issues from land use to labor/employment to contracts. Our clients also include some of the largest and most well-respected hospitals and healthcare institutions in the state, including Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Atlantic Health System, Princeton HealthCare System and Bon Secours Health System, Inc. Tony Manger, Chair of the Health Care Group, has handled some of the largest and most significant healthcare mergers and acquisitions in New Jersey.

In the area of corporate law, our attorneys have developed a niche for handling mergers and acquisitions in the chemical and flavor/fragrance industry. We have been involved in at least a half dozen of these deals over the last few years. The Chair of our Corporate Group, John Vanarthos, and the rest of our corporate team represent individual entrepreneurs and startup companies by strategically guiding them from idea conception to exit strategy. Our group also represents clients of all sizes in the areas of securities, corporate governance, technology licensing, information management and product development.

(L-R) Corporate attorneys
Scott Baach, John Vanarthos,
Bob Marcus and Stefanie McNamara.



(L-R) Environmental attorneys
Martha Donovan and Edd Hogan.



(L-R) Tax attorneys Victor Elgort, Ken Meskin,
Farah Homsy and Christine Sellitti.



Bill Dreier, who heads our Products Liability Group, is widely recognized as one of the nation's leading authorities on products liability law. He is a frequent lecturer for numerous professional organizations throughout the country and author of more than 30 law review articles on products liability law and alternative dispute resolution, 380 published judicial opinions, and two highly respected texts.

Clients who become involved in business and commercial disputes rely upon the skills of our Litigation Group, which includes more than 30 attorneys with extensive trial experience. Several members of this Group also have experience in alternative dispute resolution (ADR), which provides our clients with a faster and more effective solution to their legal problems. The Litigation Group handles cases in a wide range of subject areas, from securities and banking to intellectual property to employment law.

Our firm also has a 20-person Intellectual Property Group which focuses its practice on the preparation and prosecution of patents, trademarks and copyrights as well as IP litigation. Members of the Group have backgrounds in a broad range of engineering and sciences, including chemical, biochemical, biotechnology, electrical, mechanical and computer software and hardware. As head of the IP Practice at Norris McLaughlin, Bill Robinson recently led our IP attorneys in several successful and high-profile trademark and patent litigation cases.

The firm offers a lot of business services, yet we do offer clients consumer-type services such as tax and estate planning, and matrimonial and white-collar criminal law as well.

Q. *Who are your clients?*

A. Our clients run the gamut from *Fortune* 500 corporations to smaller publicly and privately held companies to start-up companies and individuals. Our bread and butter client is the middle-market company that is looking for high-end, cost-efficient legal services. Some smaller clients who have traditionally used smaller firms, however, are quickly outgrowing these firms as their business legal needs become more sophisticated.

Our goal, no matter what type of client, is to be a trusted advisor and business partner. Anyone can provide legal services, but we try to bring a more client-focused strategy to our relationships. We attempt to find solutions and help clients accomplish their business or individual goals. Because we are a full-service firm, there is always a collaborative effort going on between our various practice groups. We recognize that our clients rarely require legal services in just one area, and therefore, we have developed the experience and capacity to service these clients in nearly every aspect of business law.

Q. *How does Norris McLaughlin manage to recruit and retain some of the most sought after attorneys in the state?*

A. There is a war for legal talent going on in New Jersey, and throughout the United States as well. With the legal industry trending toward mergers between existing New Jersey firms and acquisitions of New Jersey firms by larger regional and national law firms occurring regularly, Norris McLaughlin tries to emphasize its unique qualities—work-life balance and legal complexity with a connection to its community—to attract high-profile attorneys. We also promote our desire to remain independent.

We have already built an established group of top-notch attorneys with whom the state's finest lawyers wish to work. We are fortunate to work with one of New Jersey's best known environmental lawyers, Edd Hogan, who is heavily involved with the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey. Edd could have chosen to work for any firm, yet he chose Norris McLaughlin & Marcus. Edd and our environmental team are involved in almost every major real estate transaction in the state.

Q. *In this changing legal marketplace, how does Norris McLaughlin & Marcus maintain its independence?*

A. My partners and I are well aware of our local roots, and therefore we attract talented attorneys who do not find mega-mergers and a change in firm culture to be appealing. We also recognize the need for providing value for our clients. We feel that by remaining independent, we are still able to provide excellent legal services at favorable rates.

We do, however, understand that to truly compete for

continued on page 44

(L-R) Litigation attorneys Margaret Raymond-Flood and Janine Matton with the Chair of the firm's IP Practice, Bill Robinson.



continued from page 43

business in today's global economy, we must be able to service our clients outside of our jurisdiction. Therefore, we maintain close relationships with other legal service providers within the United States and around the world, including Meritas.

Q. *What is Meritas?*

A. Meritas is an international affiliation of independent, mid-sized law firms which awards membership by invitation only. It is distinctive in that it provides a constant screening process and vehicle for quality control. Norris McLaughlin & Marcus is the only New Jersey affiliate of Meritas, which allows us to extend our services to clients in every state and in more than 70 foreign countries. It also allows us to assist other Meritas affili-

retain Beacon Law Firm as local counsel. Norris McLaughlin & Marcus was able to work with Beacon Law Firm to successfully litigate, creating a benchmark in the world of Chinese litigation by a non-Chinese firm.

Q. *Meritas seems like it is an effective way to serve your out-of-jurisdiction clients. How do you reach clients, prospects and referral sources on a more local level?*

A. Our attorneys are involved as leaders in a range of activities from legal groups to business associations to even politics. Many of our attorneys serve on various committees of county, state and national bar associations. One of our founders, Dick Norris, recently received the *Lifetime Achievement Award* from the Somerset County

Bar Association for his contribution to the legal community. He also served as President of the Association at one time.

Peter Hutcheon, a securities attorney, received the American Bar Association's Section of Business Law, Partnerships and Unincorporated Business Organizations Committee *2005 Martin I. Lubaroff Award* for his career-long work in partnership law. Karen Thompson, a litigation partner, was named among the *Outstanding Women in Somerset County* by the Commission on the Status of Women for her leadership role in a variety of legal and political organizations. Because of the efforts of these individuals and others, Norris McLaughlin & Marcus has created a reputation in the legal industry which leads to referrals from attorneys both inside and outside of New Jersey.

Members of our firm are actively involved in a variety of local and state-wide business groups. The firm is a member of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey, where Edd Hogan sits on the Board of Directors. Edd has also led the organization's Environmental Business Council Roundtable for many years. Construction attorney Dan Guadalupe is co-founder of a group called Puerto Ricans in Management and Executive Roles. This group is dedicated to creating networking and career opportunities for Hispanic professionals. Nick Pellitta and Jim Laskey are, respectively, Board Members of the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce and the Somerset County Business Partnership. Other examples of general business and industry-related trade organizations we are involved with include the New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce, Venture Association-New Jersey, Industrial Commercial Real Estate Women, Turnaround Management Association, and the Women's Presidents' Organization. We go where our clients go so that we are continuously in touch with the issues that are affecting their businesses.



(L-R) Products Liability attorneys Kerry Roach, Steve Karg, Bill Dreier, Karen Thompson and Haekyoung Suh.

ate firms by providing services to their clients who have legal needs in our jurisdiction.

A network of more than 5,000 attorneys, Meritas affords our clients more reach and depth than any singular law firm in the world. Our firm is very active within the various Meritas sections, which are organized by legal practice areas and industry segments. One of our products liability attorneys attempting to provide services for his client out of jurisdiction can utilize the Meritas products liability section to access the knowledge and experience of products liability attorneys around the world.

We recently utilized the Meritas network on a litigation matter through our collaboration with the new Beijing Meritas affiliate, Beacon Law Firm. The Beacon Law Firm has an established legal reputation and grasp of Chinese legislation which firms outside the country could never attain. This local relationship that we have in China has allowed one of our clients, an importer of a variety of specialty tires from factories in China, to

Some of our attorneys are also active in local politics. Glenn Stein, a corporate attorney, is Vice Chair of the Somerset County Employer Legislative Affairs Committee for the Somerset County Business Partnership. Joel Jacobson, a real estate and banking partner, is Chair of the Chatham Township Planning Board. Jeff Casaletto, one of our environmental lawyers, was recently elected a member of the Stockton Borough Council. Utilities attorney Jim Laskey recently received the *Annual Legislative Award* for his work regarding the Election Law Enforcement Commission's (ELEC) new lobbying rules. Other members of the firm have served on high-profile New Jersey Governor- and Supreme Court-appointed committees and commissions.

Q. *Do you feel it is the responsibility of an organization to give back to the community? If so, how does Norris McLaughlin & Marcus go about this?*

A. We do feel it is the responsibility of the organization, both on the firm level and on the individual level, to give back to our community. Our firm has a Community Relations Committee which is responsible for identifying and implementing charitable initiatives. These initiatives involve all of our employees. The firm holds fundraisers for breast cancer awareness and research, conducts school supply and food drives, and "adopts" families during the holidays. The firm also financially supports dozens of other worthwhile causes. Within the past year, the firm received an award from the Somerset Valley YMCA for its participation on its Board and the establishment of the McLaughlin Scholarship Fund.

The firm also supports our attorneys' pro bono efforts. Pat Collins, head of our Labor and Employment practice, has been active with Legal Services of New Jersey and has been honored by this organization for his considerable pro bono efforts on behalf of low-income clients. Last year, the firm was given the *Equal Justice Award* by the New Jersey State Bar Association and Legal Services of New Jersey for its commitment to pro bono work. In addition, the firm was presented with the Hunterdon Prevention Resources' *Pro Bono Recognition Award*.

There are many attorneys at the firm who have become active citizens in their own neighborhoods. Mike Ligorano, an immigration and land use attorney, has been a devoted volunteer to the Arc of Hunterdon County for several years and recently received the Arc's *Statewide Volunteer of the Year Award*. John Vanarthos serves on the Board of Trustees for Court Appointed Special Advocates of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties, which is an organization dedicated to preserving the rights of children in placement. Corporate partner Bob Gabrielski is on the Board of Trustees of the Adult Day Center of Somerset County, which provides affordable medical and social daycare services for disabled and elderly residents of Somerset County. Finally, Peter Hutcheon

was honored for helping to establish Somerset County Crimestoppers.

Q. *Why choose Norris McLaughlin & Marcus?*

A. Because of its entrepreneurial roots, Norris McLaughlin & Marcus understands cost and benefit. Clients want three things from their attorneys: top-level legal expertise, responsiveness and practical/cost-effective services. This formula is not very complicated but requires ongoing reinforcement. Norris McLaughlin & Marcus has successfully adopted each element of that formula as part of its service model.

Clients choose us for our ability to meet all of their legal needs by offering them access to high-quality legal expert-



(L-R) Healthcare attorneys Alyssa Verderami, Ira Novak, Tony Manger and Marion Littman.

ise in 30 different practice areas. Our attorneys are among the best in the business, with a high percentage of them being listed among the *Best Lawyers in America*.

Norris McLaughlin & Marcus also understands the significance of being responsive to clients. Phone calls are promptly returned, documents are prepared and turned around in a timely fashion, and deadlines are met. Clients are updated so that they know where their matters stand and how they are being handled each step of the way. In addition, the attorneys at Norris McLaughlin & Marcus pride themselves on taking a practical approach to representing clients. We know that risk management always requires a heavy dose of common sense. Taking a pragmatic approach to a matter almost always saves money, avoids wasted time and typically provides better results. ■

For more information about Norris McLaughlin & Marcus, visit www.nmmlaw.com.