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Features:

Ronald J. Schutz

Attorney of the Month

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RONALD

Lawyer by Day, Indiana Jones on the Weekends

By Lynette Carrington

As the chair of the national IP litigation group, regional managing partner of Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P.'s New York office, and a member of the firm's executive board, it might seem that Ronald Schutz would have a daunting task juggling a full caseload and dividing time between Minnesota and New York. But it's the challenge of successfully managing and practicing that continues to propel Schutz to new professional heights. His area of practice encompasses business and patent litigation, software, trade secrets and life sciences. But he also manages to work in a healthy dose of outdoor and adventure pursuits in his spare time.

For Schutz, an unorthodox journey led him to his career in the legal field. "I grew up on a farm in southwestern Minnesota. It was a diversified dairy farming operation, so I had to milk cows twice a day and work constantly," said Schutz. "I would not trade that upbringing for anything, but it was clear to me that I did not want to make my living being a farmer. I remember watching 'Perry Mason' and that's what got me thinking that I could be a lawyer. I was a good student and decided that I would continue to study hard and go to law school." His course was set and he worked toward his goal, even obtaining a degree in mechanical engineering along the way.

Being Inspired

"We didn't have much money when I was growing up on the farm," explained Schutz. "If I was going to go to college, I had to pay for it. I won an ROTC scholarship in high school and attended Marquette University. After graduation, I had the option to go into the military immediately to pay back my four year service obligation, or go

to law school first. Because we weren't at war, I asked the Army if I could go to law school, pay for it myself, and then go in the Army as a lawyer. They agreed." After graduating from the University of Minnesota Law School and passing the bar exam he was commissioned as a captain.

Schutz's first legal job was in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps where he served as a defense lawyer, representing soldiers accused of such crimes as drug dealing, rape, assault, theft, and even a murder case, which he won. "My first boss was Major Tim Cork. I was a zealous young lawyer, extremely aggressive and I stepped on a lot of toes. His job was to give me advice and counsel me and he did an excellent job," said Schutz. "He was my first mentor and had a huge impact on me because he was a great lawyer, taught me when I should be going 100 miles an hour and when I needed to tone it down a little bit."

Growing into a Mentorship Role

"Being a mentor is an integral part of my job," noted Schutz. "It has been for a long time. I had the good fortune in 1995 of trying a case with my best friend and partner, Marty Lueck, against General Electric, which we won. The verdict was \$110.5 million. It was the seventh largest jury verdict of any kind that year." They were both 39 years old and got their pictures in the National Law Journal. It proved to be a huge boost to both their careers.

Shortly after that victory, the firm reorganized and Schutz became the chair of the intellectual property litigation group. "I basically built that department, not

J. SCHUTZ



Gotham Synchronized Swim Team.”

Since his children are grown, it is a little easier for Schutz to split his time between Minnesota and New York, but it is still a skilled act of juggling. “I spend more business days in New York than Minneapolis, but I also have a lot of other work-related travel. I think I’ve been in New York 125 days this year,” said Schutz. He spent this past Thanksgiving in New York where two of his children were able to join him and his wife.

Hobbies and Adventure Pursuits

Schutz is a big fan of outdoor activities and adventures. “I like to go hunting when I get a chance, which isn’t often enough. I usually go a couple of times in the fall – pheasant hunting in South Dakota. I’ve also been wild boar hunting in Georgia, grizzly bear hunting in Alaska, and quail hunting in Tennessee. I run outside year-round, even if it is 10 below zero. I’ve run a number of triathlons and marathons, including a marathon on the island of Spitsbergen, which is half way between the Arctic Circle and the North Pole. Lately, I’ve started doing Tough Mudder races, which are hard. You usually don’t see guys my age out there. It is 10-12 miles cross-country with about 25 military style obstacles. It’s an extremely difficult event, but I really enjoy it. They’ve held it twice in Minnesota and I’ve done them both,” noted Schutz.

For the past six years, the attorney has done the M.S. 150-mile bike ride from Proctor to White Bear Lake to raise money for The Multiple Sclerosis Society. “I’ve also done solo skydiving,” he said. “If

sweetheart, Janet, whom he began dating

when they were both sophomores. They have been

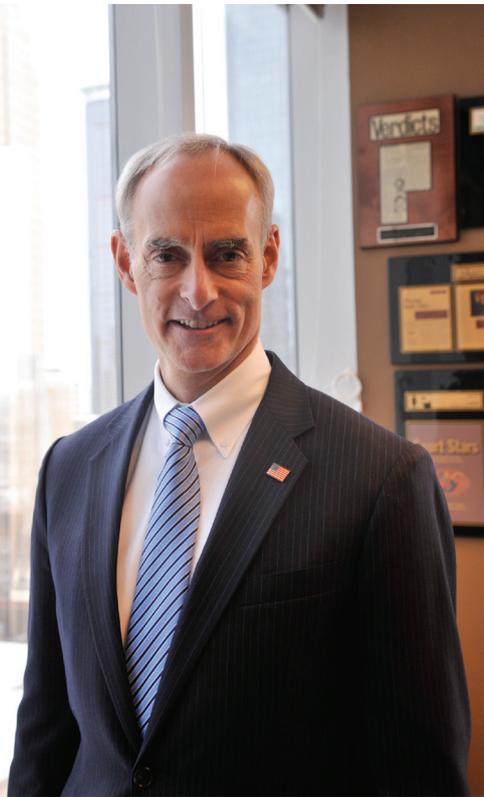
married for 36 years and have a family pursuing vastly different fields. “Our oldest boy, Matt, is a consultant living in London. This year he got his United Kingdom citizenship. He’s a dual citizen and a world traveler, having been to more than 100 countries,” said Schutz. “Our second child, Erik, went to West Point. He served in the military as an infantry officer with combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. After getting out of the service in 2012, Erik began pursuing his MBA at Harvard Business School with his sights set on becoming an investment banker. Our third child, Kristin, went to Southern Methodist University. She works in New York and I get to see her quite a bit. In her spare time she swims with the

completely from scratch because we had some lawyers doing IP litigation at the time, but from 1996 to the present, I recruited a number of lateral associates and partners into that group and grew that department. I mentored lots of people and many of those people are partners in the firm today.”

Schutz is giving an encore performance at the New York office where he’s building the same team, mentoring as he goes. “I split my time between Minnesota and New York,” noted Schutz. “It’s just a part of what I do every day.”

An Accomplished Family

Schutz is married to his high school



it's got some hint of adventure to it, then I'll do it. I'd like to be Indiana Jones, but my day job keeps getting in the way."

Legal Incarnations

Much has changed over the course of Schutz's career. "I spent four years in the U.S. Army doing criminal trial work. I was a defense lawyer for two years and then a prosecutor for two years. I had 20 jury trials; all felony cases," stated Schutz. In 1985, he left the Army and did a brief stint at Merchant & Gould before joining his current firm in 1987. "When I started at Robins I did a substantial amount of environmental litigation for Burlington Northern Railroad and insurance companies. Then, in the early '90s patent litigation started heating up. Because I had a technical degree, and the firm started doing patent cases, I switched over to that," said Schutz.

In 1992, he started on the *Fonar v. GE* case that culminated in the large verdict in 1995 and effectively launched the firm's patent and IP litigation practice that now has about 100 attorneys. Schutz has continued to try high stakes patent cases and has several eight-figure jury verdicts, including a verdict of \$66 million that resulted in him being named in 2008 to the National Law Journal's annual list of the nation's top 10 litigators. He is also a member of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

"The attractiveness of patent litigation is the types of technologies I handle. I've done everything from MRI machines, CT

machines and radio station technologies to cellphones and cameras," Schutz explained. "You also get to meet really interesting people and that's what makes it fun. The inventors and the experts ... these are smart folks. It's humbling to work with people like that and it's a lot of fun."

"The one thing I have not accomplished, but I hope to, is to argue before The United States Supreme Court. I've had the good fortune of having a lot of big jury verdicts. I've won a lot of cases and got a lot of recognition and that's all very satisfying, but arguing a case before the United States Supreme Court would be on my legal bucket list," Schutz explained. "It's tough to get there these days because they don't take that many cases and a lot of the cases they do take are argued by Supreme Court appellate specialists."

Schutz is also very active in community affairs. He serves on several boards, including the Guthrie Theater and the YMCA of the Twin Cities and he is the most recent past chair of the Minnesota Commission on Judicial Selection.

Whether he's in a courtroom or on the Tough Mudder course, Schutz's dedication shines through in everything he does. As he works to develop the Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi L.L.P. office in New York, his expertise in building a team of highly-qualified and competent attorneys will continue the firm's legacy of excellence.

At A Glance

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Education

- B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, Marquette University, 1978
- J.D., University of Minnesota Law School, 1981

Practice Areas

- Intellectual Property
- Business Litigation

Professional Memberships

- Adjutant General Search Committee
- American Intellectual Property Law Association
- Minnesota Commission on Judicial Selection
- American College of Trial Lawyers

Honors & Awards

- Named an IP Star, IP Stars
- Top National Plaintiff Patent Lawyer, IAM 1000: The World's Leading Patent Practitioners
- Named a Life Sciences Star, LMG Life Sciences
- Listed in IAM Strategy 300 – The World's Leading IP Strategists
- Listed in IAM250 – World Leading IP Strategists
- Minneapolis Intellectual Property Lawyer of the Year, Best Lawyers
- Litigation Star, Benchmark Litigation
- Ranked #1 in Minnesota for Litigation: Intellectual Property in Chambers USA
- Listed in 500 Leading Lawyers in America, Lawdragon
- National Law Journal Top 10 Litigator List