

## Rainmaker Q&A: Robins Kaplan's Ronald Schutz

*Law360, New York (August 09, 2013, 9:10 AM ET)* -- Ronald J. Schutz is the chairman of Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi LLP's national IP litigation group, regional managing partner of the firm's New York office, and a member of the firm's executive board. He is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.



*Ronald Schutz*

Schutz has served as trial counsel in many patent infringement cases, including *Fonar Corporation v. General Electric* (\$110.5 million jury verdict); *Grantley v. Clear Channel* (\$66 million jury verdict); *St Clair Intellectual Property Consultants Inc. v. Canon Inc.* (\$34.7 million jury verdict); *St Clair Intellectual Property Consultants Inc. v. Sony Corp.* (\$25 million jury verdict); and *Personal Audio LLC v. Apple Inc.* (\$8 million jury verdict).

Schutz is a former chairman and current board member of the Center of the American Experiment, a member of the board of directors of the Guthrie Theater and the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities. He began his career in the United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corp and was assigned to the Seventh Infantry Division where he tried 20 criminal jury trials, including trials for murder, rape, assault and drug dealing.

### **Q: How did you become a rainmaker?**

A: I became a rainmaker through a combination of hard work and luck. I believe that Seneca the Younger was the first person identified as saying "Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity." The preparation comes from honing your legal skills. The opportunity comes from networking and, candidly, some self-promotion.

The first phase of my legal career was spent in the Army JAG Corps where I tried 20 criminal jury trials. This gave me considerable courtroom skills, which I parlayed into a \$110 million patent infringement verdict against General Electric in 1995. (This was when nine figure verdicts were extremely rare.) From there it was a matter of networking and seeking speaking opportunities. In 1996, I spoke at 14 CLE seminars. I also wrote several articles. All of this led to more cases and more large verdicts and several awards and honors including induction into the American College of Trial Lawyers and being named by the National Law Journal in 2008 to their annual list of the Nation's Top Litigators.

**Q: How do you stay a rainmaker?**

A: It is important to know a lot of people, so I spend a lot of time building my network. I continue to speak and write and I'm on several nonprofit boards. I belong to an angel investing group. I'm also actively involved in politics, which directly led to my being named chair of the Minnesota Judicial Selection Commission under our previous governor. This was arguably the most visible lawyer position in the state. I have very little involvement with bar associations. Bar association work can lead to contacts that can lead to clients. But in my "spare time" I prefer to rub elbows with business people.

**Q: What advice would you give to an aspiring rainmaker?**

A: First, hone your legal skills and become a great lawyer. Second, and in parallel, build your network and build a name for yourself. Understand the difference between brand development and client development. Brand development includes writing and speaking. Client development is asking someone for work. Lawyers tend to confuse the two and think the former is the latter.

**Q: Tell us a tale of landing a big client.**

A: Several years ago, I had a client that changed its business focus resulting in my contact in the legal department leaving for another job. I stayed in touch with this person and when I became the managing partner of our New York office I reached out and told him that because we now had an office in New York we could get together more frequently. A lunch with him led to a lunch with his boss (the head of litigation), which led to a meeting and presentation to his boss's boss, which led to a meeting with the CEO of the company, which led to our being retained on a large litigation matter.

I learned after the fact that the client had, as would be expected, talked to others before hiring us. One of the lawyers they talked with was one of their regular outside counsel with whom I had developed a relationship after we met on a CLE panel. The lessons here are that your network must be built and maintained. You need to stay in touch with people because out of sight is out of mind.

*The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the firm, its clients, or Portfolio Media Inc., or any of its or their respective affiliates. This article is for general information purposes and is not intended to be and should not be taken as legal advice.*