

Franchise Times®

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Franchise Times' 2004 **LEGAL EAGLES**

We think all lawyers are super. Well, that's not exactly true, but we do know there are more super lawyers out there than the 100 who made our official 2004 Legal Eagles list.

That's not to take anything away from these impressive 100. They are the hands-down winners—the attorneys' attorneys.

We asked lawyers—and a few clients who wanted to put in their two cents (oh, if only that was what a billable hour really cost) to choose the “franchise lawyers at the top of their game; the rainmakers; the go-to lawyers; the ethical, problem-solvers who are respected by their peers, adversaries and clients alike.”

And while we thought we were asking a lot, we were impressed by the reasons readers gave us of why they were nominating a particular attorney. Their opinions of their nominees were high praise, indeed.

While some comments were specific to the particular attorney, we noticed some common threads on what makes a memorable attorney—and it wasn't just winning in court.

Some of the descriptive phrases that popped up over and over were:

- Detail-oriented with excellent follow-through
- A persuasive negotiator; vigilant
- Creative problem-solver
- Articulate; charismatic; professional
- Knowledgeable (about the law and about their clients' business)
- Responsive to clients, and never wastes their time with trivial matters
- Neat (good grooming does count)
- Gives attorneys a good name (obviously someone the lawyer joke writers won't be following around for material)
- Takes a leadership role in associations such as the American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, as well as writing articles, giving speeches and being visible in the franchise community (See, all that volunteer time does pay off)

From a franchisor attorney, we heard: “The best compliment I can pay (no names please) is that when I get a call from a franchisee or dealer who needs a lawyer, I always refer them to (my nominee). He is sensible, smart, funny and extremely likeable. If I were a franchisee who needed a trial lawyer...” that's who he'd hire. (Actually, we know this lawyer, and we agree with the assessment, but try to get his name out of us and you'll have to sue us.)

To sum it up: A Legal Eagle is someone who is intelligent, tenacious and knows the law and his or her client's business. But he's also someone who has a highly evolved human side, with the compassion, personality and ethics that make clients and peers feel confident that they're in good hands.

Congratulations to all our Legal Eagles. May you continue to be an inspiration to your partners in law and to the attorneys on the other side of the negotiation table. **FT**

—Nancy Weingartner



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Farrell Fritz, P. C. represents many franchisors in the U. S., providing counsel on all aspects of franchise and distribution law.

Harold L. Kestenbaum, Counsel, represents franchisors only, both start-up and established. He has a unique blend of experience in franchise law. Formerly CEO of a national franchisor, he serves as a Director of four nationally and internationally known franchisors, was a franchisee, and was the President of a publicly-traded franchise consulting company.