

Daily Journal

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TOP 100 LAWYERS IN CALIFORNIA

EDITORS' NOTE

This is the 15th year the *Daily Journal* has published a list of California's 100 leading lawyers. Our goal has always been to compile the purest list possible while understanding that it could never be scientifically accurate. Dozens of worthy lawyers' names are left in the cutting room every year in an often-wrenching process.

In compiling our list, we look for lawyers who moved the needle, had an impact on the legal industry, our state, the nation and the world. This isn't a popularity contest. In fact, some of the lawyers we honor represent very unpopular causes and institutions, but they are skilled practitioners.

We considered more than 1,000 attorneys this year. Our staff of reporters—the largest of any legal publication in the nation—researched candidates' recent work and made their arguments to editors.

As you read through this issue, we think you'll agree that the result is a pretty impressive group of lawyers who are working on some of the weightiest issues of the day in all corners of the globe.

— David Houston, Editor



Miles D. Scully

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Gordon & Rees LLP

Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County

Litigation

Specialty: Commercial Litigation, Employment, and Environmental/Toxic Tort

even the most die-hard fans, Gordon & Rees LLP was a mid-sized firm with two offices and approximately 100 attorneys.

It was then that Scully became managing partner of the San Diego office and was tasked with growing the firm. It's safe to say the attorney, now assistant managing partner of the firm, was successful.

Today, Gordon & Rees has 26 offices in 17 states with about 500 attorneys. The San Diego office that had only 10 attorneys in 1999 now has more than 100, making it one of the biggest in the city.

"We came up with a business plan where we decided to get the best people from the best law firms in all of the practice areas that businesses need," Scully said. "We were going to offer great attorneys at a better price. Lo and behold, it was a recipe for success."

Scully admits he initially had doubts about the firm's growth, but that his business plan and philosophy were key to getting attorneys early on.

"I believe that everyone wants more than a job. They want to be part of a cause. I wanted to provide more responsive legal services that were as good or better than big firms at a better price."

The first imports consisted of an employment group from Littler Mendelson PC. Then the head of the real estate prac-

tice at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP joined. After that it was what Scully describes as a "snowball effect."

Scully said Gordon & Rees employs a "small firm" decentralized approach to each office and managing partner. Each managing partner is encouraged to think like an entrepreneur and is responsible for the office finances.

"The person you select as a managing partner of an office is the most important selection," Scully said. "We look for people who have entrepreneurial spirit and who are willing to learn and are good with working with people."

Despite the firm's tremendous growth—which Scully said happened with close to no attrition and without accruing debt—he's not in favor of opening offices abroad.

"We run very efficiently and keep overhead low. That's one of the reasons we're able to pass on lower rates to clients."

Scully said he goes to bed every night thinking of ways to turn the business on its head. Even if he doesn't come up with a massive, revolutionary idea, he says he comes up with ways to improve the firm.

To describe his mentality, he uses the old adage, "Shoot for the moon and if you miss you'll land among the stars."

— Ryne Hodkowski

In 1999, while people were preparing for a massive shutdown of their computers from the Y2K bug and the return of the Star Wars saga flummoxed