

2009 Legal Eagles

Record nominations make this an elite list

By Jonathan Maze

If you don't see your name on this year's Legal Eagles list, don't feel bad. It was really difficult to make it this time around.

How difficult? This year the recommendations just kept coming. They quickly surpassed last year's total, and by the time we found our way out of the pile of nominations to plead "No mas!" we had double the number of nominations as the previous, record-setting year.

What to make of it? For one thing, we've long thought that the number of excellent franchise attorneys has always far exceeded the number of spots we have on

this Legal Eagles list. The number of nominees simply confirms our suspicions.

This year we've broken out our Legal Eagles north of the border into their own list. Canadian lawyers are the only international lawyers we include on the list. Don't ask us why. That's just the way it's always been.

So what makes a Legal Eagle soar above the competition?

Knowledge, abilities and thoroughness were the top attributes. Nominators frequently expressed their appreciation and respect for the attorney's abilities. "The rigor and thoughtfulness he brings to his clients' cases goes far beyond good law," one nominator wrote.

"He helps make good decisions, for the long term and the good of the company. We have tremendous trust in him."

"Extremely knowledgeable about franchises, the legalities, partnerships, contracts between franchisors and franchisee," another wrote.

Skills and knowledge help. But nominators also recognized when the attorneys take extra steps for their clients. One client noted that it contracted an attorney seeking to close a deal on three restaurants within a few weeks at the end of the year. The attorney "went above and beyond in working with the seller's counsel to complete everything in time ... It was not an easy

challenge during the holidays."

It also helps to be responsive. Many Legal Eagles were heralded for returning phone calls after-work hours and for willingly answering even the most arcane questions. "He not only knows every section of every franchise agreement by heart," one wrote, "but he is unbelievably responsive whether it's 9 a.m. on a Monday morning or 9 p.m. on a Saturday night. He's the best in the business, no question about it."

Another nominator wrote that his attorney had "a never-ending tenacity for client service, coupled with the ability to offer well grounded and consistent advice have left myself and colleagues continually impressed."

A few attorneys were nominated by lawyers on the other side of the aisle. One Legal Eagle "is brilliant yet collegial, and I have opposed him on many occasions. His knowledge of franchise law is only exceeded by his qualities as a decent person."

Another lawyer is "a champion of franchisee rights in a universe that is dominated by franchisors. As a franchisor, I respect (his) tenacity and integrity."

And it helps to be nice. A fellow attorney is far more likely to nominate a likable lawyer. "He always maintains his sense of humor," one wrote. And likability can help a person forgive that lawyer's shortcomings. "Hall of fame franchise lawyer," one wrote. "All around good guy. Golf handicap is suspect." **FT**



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Practice Areas:

- Franchise Law
- Business Law
- Real Estate Matters
- Dispute Resolution (including Litigation, Arbitration and Mediation)

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Richard L. Rosen has represented franchisors and franchisees in a wide range of business and legal matters for over 30 years. Mr. Rosen has formed, guided and counseled franchisee associations as well as franchising entities and has litigated, arbitrated and mediated on their respective behalves when necessary. His franchise clients have encompassed virtually all business areas including the fast food, service, healthcare, fashion, real estate, gas service stations, optical, hotel, recreation, home improvement, childcare, elder care and learning fields. Mr. Rosen has written and lectured extensively on franchise topics and issues. He is a member of the American Bar Association Forum on Franchising, a founding member of the New York Franchising and Licensing Section of the New York State Bar Association, immediate past Chairman of the Fair Franchising Standards Committee of the American Association of Franchisees and Dealers, a member of the Steering Committee of the National Franchise Mediation Program, a member of the CPR Institute for Dispute Resolution Panel of Neutrals, and a member of the International Franchise Association. Richard Rosen is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in American Law*, *Who's Who in the World*, *Best Lawyers in America*, *Super Lawyers* and a variety of similar publications.