

## 2 FYI Interview

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Gerald Haberborn



Partner at Lewis & Gellen LLP

### DETAILS

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# Sixty seconds with Gerald Haberborn

**Q Gerald, you're a partner at US law firm, Lewis & Gellen LLP. Tell us a bit about yourself and the practice.**

Lewis & Gellen represents diverse clients in domestic and cross-border transactions, negotiation, arbitration and mediation, as well as in complex liability and commercial litigation. I work closely with clients on 'both sides' of the corporate practice - counselling in the origination, negotiation and execution of business transactions while maintaining an active docket of commercial trials. I take enormous pleasure in being able to provide counsel and advice in the entirety of clients' businesses, which creates a solid foundation for the successful litigation of complex domestic and international commercial transactions when problems arise.

**Q Why did you choose a career in law and what opportunities does your work at Lewis & Gellen afford you?**

I was always interested in what made the biggest deals work, how all the moving parts come together creating new corporate entities and giant projects. I learned early on that it was the lawyers who made it happen. Today, I am lucky enough to have developed relationships with clients where broader thinking yields tangible results - and work with a capable team of like-minded colleagues. My fascination with how deals come together, and how they come undone, remains unabated.

**Q What, in your opinion, constitutes good business practice and how is this reflected in what you do?**

Contrary to what I learned in law school, business clients are not best served by specialist attorneys, i.e. those who focus solely on one deal type or only try

cases. Over the years, client representations in both business transactions and dispute resolutions (trial and arbitrations) solidified into a pattern that became evident to me. To resolve business disputes successfully you have to know how to do the transactions. To process transactions most effectively, the lawyer has to know how to structure them to withstand challenging litigation. This combination is hard to find in one lawyer - but possible!

**Q Of all your highlights to date, what was your best career moment?**

It would have to be being chosen by peers in the law as one of Illinois' 'Leading Lawyers' in both Commercial Litigation and Professional Malpractice Defence Litigation, followed by selection as a finalist in Fast Company Magazine's 2005 'Fast 50,' as one of the US's 'high impact legal leaders.'

**Q And your greatest personal achievement?**

Every day of the 'other half' of my life - my wife, children, home. Being blessed with those riches, and sustaining strong relationships with them in the midst of the pressures and demands of an active law practice. I believe that is a good measure of personal achievement.

**Q One last thing, Gerry. What is the soundest piece of advice ever given to you that you'd like to pass on?**

Specialists finish last. To know only one area of the law limits the ability to help business owners and managers resolve complex corporate and financial problems. And work as hard as you can to understand the full situation from the client's perspective. That is the only way to give useful legal counsel. **ACQ**