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In 1995, *The American Lawyer* identified the private bar's next generation of leaders. Now, we look back at them—and ahead to their successors.

The word “elite” comes from an Old French verb meaning “to choose.” In its modern connotation, the word has also come to stand for high achievement. Both meanings apply to the special report that follows—the culmination of an intensive effort by the staff of *The American Lawyer* to choose 45 of the highest-performing members of the private bar under the age of 45.

We had help. Many months ago, we contacted all the firms in The Am Law 200 to seek their nominations. We also spun our own Rolodexes, scanned Web sites and news clippings, and reached out to luminaries within particular practice areas to solicit their thoughts.

As for criteria, there were a very few. We looked for prodigies who had already notched a major trial win or complex deal, for those who had established remarkable records of professional development, for those who could point to an independent book of business, for those who might have overcome adversity. We also looked far and wide. It would be possible to construct a list of 45 young bankruptcy specialists whose accomplishments were noteworthy (particularly in this market), but we wanted to draw from many walks of law.

The result, we think, will stand up over time. That was certainly true of the alumni from our last such effort; their impressive updates appear throughout the following pages. So, for all you elitists out there, happy talent scouting.



ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN DUCAN



THEODORE BOUTROUS, JR., 42

**Gibson, Dunn
& Crutcher
Los Angeles**

TO HIS MANAGING PARTNER, Kenneth Doran, Ted Boutrous is just “fun to be with.” Says his mentor, Solicitor General Theodore Olson: “Everyone loves to work with him—staff people, messengers, paralegals.” Which is all to the good, because Boutrous works for some notably unsympathetic clients: feisty media organizations and big corporations socked with punitive damage awards.

It’s a far cry from his father’s legal practice in North Dakota, but Boutrous says he emulates his dad in one regard: “People had good feelings about [him], even when he was handling a difficult situation.” Yet likability—market researchers call it a high-Q rating—will take a lawyer only so far. “He consistently delivers results,” says Steven Hantler, assistant general counsel of DaimlerChrysler Corporation, who is impressed with Boutrous’s all-hours accessibility and efficiency. In the fall of 2002, says Hantler, “we brought [Boutrous] in on two separate appeals at the proverbial eleventh hour. He got fully up to speed on both matters and was able to turn around work product in both cases in one week.” Those cases are pending.

First in his class at the University of San Diego School of Law, Boutrous started out in Gibson’s Washington, D.C., office in 1987. He learned appellate practice from Olson, who involved Boutrous in some of the earliest cases to raise constitutional challenges to punitive damages, an issue that has come to define Boutrous’s career. In 1995, Olson and Boutrous teamed up to represent the Civil Justice Reform Group in a lobbying campaign to pass punitive damages reform in

Congress. The effort failed. But it helped Boutrous forge ties to the group’s high-powered members, such as the general counsel at DaimlerChrysler and Ford Motor Company. Both companies now routinely use Boutrous for key appellate work.

Boutrous is also a media law star. He learned the field from former Gibson partner Robert Sack, who is now a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. In 1997 Dow Jones & Company, Inc., hired the pair to reverse a \$222 million libel verdict, the largest in history. After Sack left for the bench in 1998, Boutrous took the lead and persuaded a Texas federal district judge to reverse the verdict [“Erasing a Verdict,” May 2000]. Boutrous has become a regular outside counsel for Dow Jones.

Boutrous has also punched his ticket as a member of both the firm’s executive and management committees. He now serves as the cochair of the appellate practice and the media law practice group. And in 2000 Doran brought Boutrous to the firm’s Los Angeles office to land more federal and California appellate work. Apparently, nice guys don’t always finish last in the law.

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UNDER 45

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