

Trials, transactions
and the insider's guide
to the practice of law.

Supplement to the Los Angeles Daily Journal
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Pictured left to right:
E. Randol Schoenberg,
Meredith Blake,
Marcellus McRae and
David Cruz



Photo by Hugh Williams

It's a rare melding of teen domestic abuse, marriage for gay couples, Nazi looting of family art — and tennis star/model Anna Kournikova. That mix merely skims the surface

of this year's **20 under 40**, our annual compilation of the top young attorneys in California's deep pool of legal talent. So, dive into page 12 and take a look.

TAPPING^{the} RESERVOIR

Here's Our Formula for Success:

Take 50,000 lawyers younger than 40, throw in remarkable accomplishments throughout the early stages of their careers and narrow the field to 20. The result is an incredibly skillful group of lawyers sure to make their mark on the legal landscape, also known as our 20 under 40.

With our 11th annual selection of California's top young attorneys, the editors and staff at Daily Journal EXTRA should have learned a few tricks to make the whole process easier by now. ■ Jokes about pulling names from a hat aside, we should calculate a mathematical equation: Plug in date of birth, book of business, practice area, key victories and other noteworthy successes; divide by the square root of lawyerly greatness; and spit out the names of 20 attorneys under 40 for inclusion on our list. ■ Instead, the collection of deserving lawyers grows each year, making our picks all the more difficult and impressive. ■ This year's group includes attorneys who have developed novel legal theories, a couple of political bigwigs and even a pair of corporate attorneys who managed to make a buck during the downturn. ■ Bruno Katz wrote the book on defending military pilots against claims of wrongdoing with the Judge Advocate General's Corps, while USC professor David Cruz is working to extend First Amendment rights to same-sex couples who wish to marry. ■ As chair of the judicial committee of La Raza Lawyers Association of California, Santa Clara County Deputy District Attorney Christopher Arriola carries the voice of the Latino constituency to the bench. And Browne & Woods partner Eric George has the ear of Gerald Parsky for recommending federal judicial candidates. ■ Pillsbury Winthrop's Allison Leopold Tilley and Latham & Watkins' Tracy Edmonson certainly break the mold. Both are women in the ultimate men's world of law — corporate practice — and both have continued to excel despite the slumping economy and their locations in tech-heavy Northern California. ■ In the public-interest arena, Judy London continues to fight for immigrants' rights at a time of tightening border security and increasing federal limits on immigration. Meredith Blake, meanwhile, chose to start her own public-interest group, reaching out to young girls who are victims of domestic violence. ■ Add Hollywood — both talent and the studios — real estate, a top municipal lawyer and a few others, and our lesson in mathematics is almost complete. ■ As you read about the 20 attorneys on the following pages, we're sure you'll agree: It doesn't take a math whiz to calculate success for their futures.

20 under 40

Marcellus McRae

At 15, Marcellus McRae entered the University of California, Los Angeles, as a freshman. At 20, he was attending Harvard Law School. Today, at 38, McRae is co-chair of the business crimes and investigations practice group at Los Angeles' Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher.

And although he admits that he was a bright kid, McRae says the words "gifted" and "prodigy" don't apply. The litigator credits his father, Frank, and mother, Lena, for his success as a student and lawyer.

"My parents had grown up under segregation, and they saw that education was going to be a tremendous equalizer and a way for me to make my way in life," McRae says.

The family left Memphis, Tenn., in 1966 when McRae was a few months old. Frank McRae had attended the University of Memphis on a football scholarship and just been drafted by the Chicago Bears.

McRae lived in Chicago for the first few years

of his life until the Los Angeles Rams signed his father in 1970.

The family eventually settled in Beverly Hills where Frank McRae enrolled his son in Los Angeles' International Children's School, a predominantly African-American private school which, McRae recalls, had him speaking French by the time he was 7. It was there that McRae skipped three grades, enabling him to enter law school at a young age.

Following law school, he moved back to Los Angeles and joined DeCastro, West, Chodorow & Burns and, later, Debevoise & Plimpton. In 1995, he became an assistant U.S. attorney, handling bankruptcy, securities and tax fraud cases before joining Gibson Dunn in 1998.



The white-collar and employment-law litigator is on the team of lawyers representing Russian tennis star Anna Kournikova in her \$10 million defamation lawsuit against General Media Inc., publisher of Penthouse Magazine. Last year, the adult magazine published photos of a topless woman in its June 2002 issues that it allegedly erroneously identified as Kournikova. The case is pending.

McRae is one of the lead lawyers representing Pacific Maritime Association in a gender and race discrimination lawsuit brought against it by a group of African-American women employees.

"Marcellus is extremely intelligent, and has a very commanding and likeable personality," Ted Boutros, co-chair of Gibson Dunn's appellate and media group, says. "And he's one of these guys who loves to try cases and get into court. You put all that together, and it's a dynamic combination."

— Liz Valsamis