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THE WASHINGTON POST AREA'S BEST LAWYERS[®]

2008 EDITION

METHODOLOGY

This list is excerpted from the 2008 edition of *The Best Lawyers in America*[®], the preeminent referral guide to the legal profession in the United States. Published for a quarter of a century, *Best Lawyers*[®] lists attorneys in 78 specialties, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, who have been chosen through an exhaustive survey in which thousands of the nation's top lawyers confidentially evaluate their professional peers. The 2008 edition of *Best Lawyers*, which will be published in November 2007, is based on more than 2 million evaluations of lawyers by other lawyers.

The method used to compile *Best Lawyers* remains unchanged since the first edition was compiled 25 years ago. Lawyers are chosen for inclusion based solely on a vote of their peers. Listings cannot be bought, and no purchase is required to be included. In this regard, *Best Lawyers* remains the gold standard of reliability and integrity in lawyer ratings.

The nomination pool for the 2008 edition consisted of all lawyers whose names appeared in the previous edition of *Best Lawyers*, lawyers who were nominated since the previous survey, and new nominees solicited from listed attorneys. In general, lawyers were asked to vote only on nominees in their own specialty in their own jurisdiction. Lawyers in closely related specialties were asked to vote across specialties, as were lawyers in smaller jurisdictions. Where specialties are national or international in nature, lawyers were asked to vote nationally as well as locally. Voting lawyers were also given an opportunity to offer more detailed comments on nominees. Each year, half of the voting pool receives fax or email ballots; the other half is polled by phone.

Voting lawyers were provided this general guideline for determining if a nominee should be listed among "the best": "If you had a close friend or relative who needed a real estate lawyer (for example), and you could not handle the case yourself, to whom would you refer them?" All votes and comments were solicited with a guarantee of confidentiality — a critical factor in the viability and validity of *Best Lawyers* surveys. To ensure the rigor of the selection process, lawyers were urged to use only their highest standards when voting, and to evaluate each nominee based only on his or her individual merits. The additional comments were used to make more accurate comparisons between voting patterns and weight votes accordingly. *Best Lawyers* uses various methodological tools to identify and correct for anomalies in both the nomination and voting process.

Ultimately, of course, a lawyer's inclusion is based on the subjective judgments of his or her fellow attorneys. While it is true that the lists may at times disproportionately reward visibility or popularity, the breadth of the survey, the candor of the respondents, and the sophistication of the polling methodology largely correct for any biases.

For all these reasons, *Best Lawyers* lists continue to represent the most reliable, accurate and useful guide to the legal profession in the United States.

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 Best Lawyers[®]
THE WORLD'S PREMIER GUIDE


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The Washington Post Magazine

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN THE WASHINGTON DC AREA

SMITH PACHTER MCWHORTER PLC

In over three decades in the construction industry, Val McWhorter and Richard Smith have seen and done it all. From the advent of the Contract Disputes Act in 1978 to the rise of the Boards of Contract Appeals in construction litigation, they and partners Mark Hanson and Brian Vella, who joined the firm shortly after its founding in 1986, have made Smith Pachter McWhorter a national leader in the multi-million dollar world of complex construction projects. The deeply respected construction and government contracts boutique has grown through the years to now stand at twenty-two attorneys. It has benefited from many long term client relationships that date to the firm's early years.

"What it takes to get it done and done well is what we do—that generates a lot of loyalty from our clients," says partner, Mark Hanson.

SMITH PACHTER MCWHORTER'S PRACTICE encompasses all facets of the construction contracting process, from bidding and negotiation; to on-project advice and counsel; to performance claims and terminations; to litigation. The firm's clients include contractors, architects/engineers, and specialty subcontractors, as well as government contractors.

VAL MCWHORTER, AT THE TOP OF THE CONSTRUCTION BAR, is the "go-to construction lawyer" according to his clients and peers, and is widely acknowledged for his courtroom presence. Over the last several years, Richard Smith has turned his considerable experience to full time service as mediator and arbitrator of construction disputes. Both attorneys are members of the prestigious American College of Construction Lawyers. They are quick to point out that partners Brian Vella and Mark Hanson have achieved prominence and recognition in their own right for excellent advice and top shelf client service. Mr. Hanson has undertaken several matters recently for contractors internationally, while Mr. Vella assisted both construction and engineering clients facing unique challenges in their construction projects. As Val McWhorter says, "Clients know if they have a construction problem they can call one of us, and we're going to be able to help them resolve it, and do so quickly and efficiently."

THE PARTNERS OF SMITH PACHTER MCWHORTER BELIEVE understanding each client's business builds upon itself, creating the deep respect and confidence essential to being entrusted with complex disputes. "I think the experience Richard and I have had, and the others are having, has set us apart as being, in essence, a part of the construction industry. They view us as part of their team," says McWhorter.



Val McWhorter

Brian Vella

Mark Hanson

Richard Smith

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Smith • Pachter • McWhorter

Attorneys At Law P.L.C.

8000 TOWERS CRESCENT DRIVE, SUITE 900
VIENNA, VA 22182

PH: 703.847.6300 • FAX: 703.847.6312

www.smithpachter.com