



Geoffrey A. Vance Age 35

Firm:

McDermott Will & Emery LLP
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Law School:

John Marshall Law School

Area of Practice:

Complex Commercial Litigation

Geoffrey Vance has a simple method for achieving success - he treats each of his clients, large and small, wealthy and poor, as if that client is his most important one. At the same time, he has managed to distinguish himself from his peers for his clarity of thought, work ethic, good judgment and dedication to the working poor.

It's little surprise, then, that Geoffrey, a partner in the Chicago office of McDermott Will & Emery LLP, has risen quickly to the heights of his profession and has become a leader in the Chicago legal community. It's no surprise, either, that Geoffrey's clients are among his biggest fans and supporters.

Geoffrey has worked on a wide array of complex cases with and against some of the premier lawyers in the country. He has been deeply involved in McDermott's representation of the major tobacco compa-

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nies, having played an active role in over 20 hotly contested arbitrations over a three year period. He is currently playing a leadership role in the McDonald's French fry litigation. Geoffrey also played a significant part in the successful representation of Liesel Pritzker in her very public litigation against her father and other members of the Pritzker family. Stephen Senderowitz, from Chicago's Winston & Strawn, praised Geoffrey's efforts in the Pritzker matter: "I was able to observe the litigation management, deposition and oral argument skills of Geoffrey, who was second chair on the McDermott team," Mr. Senderowitz said. "I was extremely impressed with his ability, as well as his maturity, tact and the ease with which he got along with others."

To his credit, Geoffrey's work as a lawyer is not limited to monster, high-profile cases. He works on cases of all sizes for all sorts of clients. "We are a small company, with an even smaller budget, yet I am made to feel like his number-one client," said Nancy Walsh, senior director of medical supplies with Schaumburg-based Consorta, Inc. "Under Geof's skillful counsel we have successfully avoided the courtroom. I feel as if Geof is my friend and a colleague who consistently has Consorta's best interests in mind." A different client parroted that observation: "As a small company against a huge, deep-pocketed corporation, my greatest fear was that they would outlast us. The strategy Geof and his team created for us took that completely out of the situation and left us on a level playing field. With that equal footing, Geof's team told our story and the courts agreed."

For all of his accomplishments, Geoffrey

is most proud of his ability to balance his professional life working for paying clients with his significant volunteer work. He has served on the board of directors of the Chicago Volunteer Legal Services Foundation (one of Chicago's oldest and largest pro bono legal service providers) since 1999, and just recently concluded a two-year term as the president of CVLS's board, during which time "CVLS underwent growth in every direction: leadership, increased staff, fundraising, and publicity and notoriety," according to Timothy Nickels, the current CVLS president and partner at Swanson, Martin & Bell LLP.

Volunteering his legal services, Geoffrey was able to help numerous pro bono clients succeed in their respective matters. For example, he once helped a minister stop attempts by board members of a homeless shelter to take a substantial amount of charitable funds for their own personal use. He also helped a widow, whose husband died of a heart attack and was left destitute to care for a mentally handicapped adult child, fight off a judgment. After years of what otherwise would have been expensive litigation, Geoffrey convinced the plaintiffs to drop their case against the widow. "Not once did he make me feel less of a client because I could not pay," the widow recalled. "Now, when I hear lawyer jokes, I don't laugh! I think of Geoffrey and know in my heart that there are lawyers who help others who cannot help themselves."

In many ways, Geoffrey consistently has distinguished himself as a lawyer and a leader in our community. One message from his clients resounds: "We are glad he is on our side."

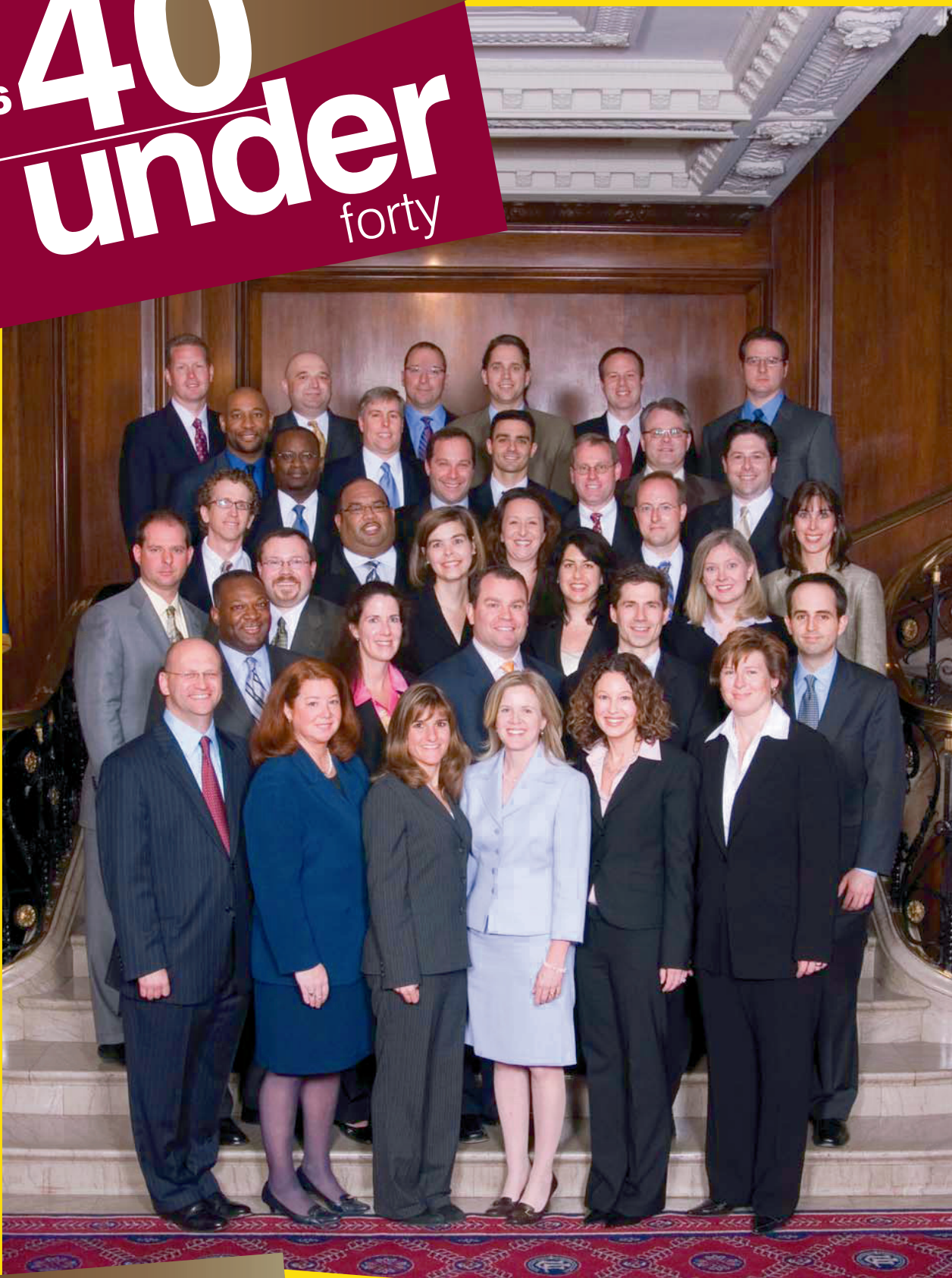
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