

Profiles



ROBERT K. MONTGOMERY '64



FREDERICK BROWN '75



KAREN L. MANOS '86



STEVEN SHOEMATE '88



KARL NELSON '91



CHRISTOPHER DUSSEAULT '94

talk about what they like about the Law School, and it is in fact very similar to Gibson Dunn,” agrees Steven Shoemate '88, co-partner-in-charge at the New York office. “It is a supportive rather than a competitive atmosphere.”

Duke Law's connection to Gibson Dunn traces back to Bob Montgomery '64, a recently-retired partner and executive committee member at the firm who may well hold a record for the longest recruiting streak at Duke Law — 40 years. Montgomery joined the Los Angeles-based firm immediately after graduating from law school and was the first Duke Law graduate hired there.

“I had heard Los Angeles firms were different, and I found that to be true,” Montgomery says. “I chose Gibson Dunn over other law firms for the same reason I chose Duke over Harvard: it was collegial and friendly, and the people seemed to care about you as a whole person.”

Montgomery clearly conveyed those attributes in his own recruiting at Duke.

“The significance of someone at [Montgomery's] level coming to the school to recruit, showing such loyalty to Duke and to the firm,

that wasn't lost on me [as a student],” recalls Christopher Dusseault '94, co-partner-in-charge of Gibson Dunn's Los Angeles-area offices. “He's a role model of loyalty to Duke and a great spokesman for the firm.”

Fred Brown '75, partner-in-charge at the firm's San Francisco office, denies a hiring conspiracy between the Law School and the law firm — “There is no Duke mafia at Gibson Dunn,” he says with a laugh — but he says Duke does a good job of preparing students for success at a firm like Gibson. “You get a superior education. You have smart people, and you are educating them in a superior way.”

The Gibson Dunn-Duke Connection

STRONG RECRUITING, COLLEGIAL CULTURES CREDITED FOR THE FIRM'S UNUSUALLY HIGH CONCENTRATION OF DUKE LAW GRADUATES IN SENIOR ROLES

THAT FIVE OF THE EIGHT U.S. offices of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher are headed by Duke Law School alumni might be a surprising fact to some, but it all makes sense to the “Gibson Dunn Dukies.”

“At both Duke and Gibson Dunn, there is a combination of a high level of quality of work balanced with the collegial and comfortable personality of the place,” says Karl Nelson '91, partner-in-charge at Gibson Dunn's Dallas office. “I think that whatever it was that appealed to me about Duke when I first visited also appealed to me when I clerked at Gibson.”

Nelson's colleagues across the firm agree: Cultural similarities between the firm and the

Law School, along with leadership of alumni who loyally recruit at Duke, have attracted Duke Law alumni to the firm and created opportunities for leadership and professional success. According to the Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher website, 32 Duke Law alumni work for the firm.

“The culture at Gibson Dunn is like nothing I've seen before,” says Karen Manos '86. A co-partner-in-charge at its Washington, D.C., office, she joined the firm after a distinguished career as a U.S. Air Force JAG. “It's the most congenial, friendly place I've been. It was like that at Duke as well.”

“I hear it even from recruits from Duke, the younger folks we're interviewing, who

MEET THE GIBSON DUNN DUKIES

Of the 32 Duke Law alumni working at Gibson Dunn, these are some who serve in senior roles:

Robert K. Montgomery '64

(joined Gibson Dunn in 1964)

- » Proprietor of Montgomery Vineyard in Napa Valley, Calif.
- » Partner, 1971–2008
- » Member of Executive Committee
- » Chairman of Finance Committee
- » Lifetime member and former chairman of Duke Law Board of Visitors
- » Former chairman and CEO of Elixir Industries, then a NYSE-listed company, 1979–81
- » Senior Vice President, Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, 1983–84

Practice areas: Transactional matters such as corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, divestitures, roll-ups, private placements, and venture capital financings

Frederick Brown '75

(joined Gibson Dunn in 2004)

- » Partner-in-charge, San Francisco office
- » Teaches trial skills for the National Institute of Trial Advocacy and the Intensive Advocacy Program at the University of San Francisco School of Law
- » Took a public-service leave of absence to work as a federal criminal investigator and as a prosecutor with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office

Practice areas: Patent, trademark and trade secret, antitrust, complex commercial and class action litigation; often coordinates the work of counsel in multiple jurisdictions

His firsthand knowledge of the quality of a Duke education is one reason Montgomery has been so committed to recruiting Duke students over the years. With decades of interviewing behind him, Montgomery says his advice to students has remained the same: "If you work hard, prepare yourself, and are flexible and open to opportunities, you will succeed as an attorney. Take courses to ready yourself in a range of ways and be open to trying new things." ♡

— Melinda Myers Vaughn

Karen L. Manos '86

(joined Gibson Dunn in 2006)

- » Co-partner-in-charge, Washington, D.C., office
- » Co-chair of Government and Commercial Contracts Practice Group

Practice areas: Government contracts issues, including civil and criminal fraud investigations and litigation, complex claims preparation and litigation, bid protests, *qui tam* suits under the False Claims Act, defective pricing, cost allowability, the Cost Accounting Standards, and corporate compliance programs

On Duke: "I chose Duke because of Judge [Robinson O.] Everett — he was a good friend of one of my professors at the Air Force Academy. He was a strong advocate for my application, and he later told me it was a good investment on his part because I wound up graduating first in my class. I arrived at Duke with a 14-month-old daughter; I found it easier to be a mother in law school than while working in the Air Force. Law school was much more relaxed and informal than the Academy. I was surprised that law students thought it was OK to miss class!"

Steven Shoemate '88

(joined Gibson Dunn in 1988)

- » Co-partner-in-charge, New York office
- » Has served on firm's Executive and Management Committees

Practice areas: Corporate transactions including private equity representations, venture capital investments, public and private securities offerings, mergers and acquisitions, and general corporate counseling

On Duke: "It's nice to continue an affiliation with both the Law School in various ways as well as the Duke community more broadly, which would include the Duke Children's Hospital, where I've been a contributor and a participant in various fund raising events. I'm happy to say that I've been back to Duke to do recruiting, which is another great way to stay in touch with the Law School. It's wonderful to see the changes in the Law School over the years."

Karl Nelson '91

(joined Gibson Dunn in 1991)

- » Partner-in-charge, Dallas office
- » Member of Labor and Employment, Employee Benefits, and Executive Compensation Practice Groups
- » Co-founder of the firm's Privacy and Data Security practice

Practice areas: Federal and state employment regulation, labor relations, and compensation and benefits law, including class and collective actions under Title VII, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act

On Duke: "Duke does a really good job of attracting and developing lawyers who are very bright and capable but also well-rounded, pleasant to be around."

Christopher Dusseault '94

(joined Gibson Dunn in 1994)

- » Co-partner-in-charge, Los Angeles and Century City offices
- » Member of Litigation Department, Antitrust and Trade Regulation, and Media and Entertainment Practice Groups
- » Member of Hiring Committee; chair of the Summer Subcommittee
- » Named one of California's "Top 20 Under 40" by the *Daily Journal* for work as trial counsel in *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, the federal constitutional challenge to California's Proposition 8, a ballot initiative prohibiting marriage for same-sex couples
- » Member of Duke Law Board of Visitors

Practice areas: Antitrust and competition law litigation and counseling, general complex commercial litigation, and trial-oriented constitutional litigation

On Duke: "When I applied to college, my father took me on a college tour. I loved Duke — it was the quintessential gorgeous college — but I wound up going to Yale. When it came time to pick a law school I remembered how much I loved Duke, and everything that I read and heard about the Law School told me that it would be a great fit. I loved every minute of the entire experience and I continue to feel a strong connection to the school today."