



## Simpson Thacher & Bartlett

[Adam Feder]

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, LLP, one of the oldest firms in New York, was founded in 1884 by three graduates of Columbia University Law School. It has six offices worldwide: New York, Palo Alto, Los Angeles, London, Hong Kong, and Tokyo. Roughly 700 attorneys are employed by those offices. The firm's name may not be prominently featured in the news, but its influence as a behind-the-scenes corporate advisor is substantial.

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett (Simpson Thacher) has what would be considered a typical "Wall Street" practice, representing all major investment banking institutions. Correspondingly, one of Simpson Thacher's major practice areas is complex litigation. The litigation department is the largest in New York. Some of its clients are JPMorgan Chase, Accenture, and Travelers. Beyond that, it has expertise in matters relating to M&A, corporate, banking, finance, and securities.

Simpson Thacher has a chairman with a public persona. Richard Beattie, a former Marine Corps fighter pilot who also serves as the firm's public face, is an expert negotiator. His passion for improving the quality of education throughout the nation's public school systems is evidenced by his involvement in a task force known as the Teaching Commission. Beattie has also started a similar organization which focuses on New York City's public schools.

One practice that stands out at Simpson Thacher is that the firm does not usually hire lateral partners. The firm would rather groom partners from those in its associate ranks. One lateral partner is hired per year, on average. As for new hires, they are gleaned from top-10 law schools almost exclusively. However, stellar grades alone will not guarantee a job offer. The firm is more concerned with how candidates will fit into the overall environment since it can handpick its associates from the best of the best. Simpson Thacher looks for those candidates who have some sort of background

outside of law, which will give them a unique perspective.

Associates and partners alike will work extremely long hours, and they will be compensated at or near the top of the scale; however, some feel that they are working so many hours as to be underpaid. The firm has been accused of being a follower in terms of giving raises and determining the amounts of bonuses by letting other firms dictate the market. While some practice areas are busy all the time, others experience some downtime, causing some associates to feel obligated to put in face time during these lulls.

The firm has a strong commitment to pro bono work. The good news for associates is that all pro bono hours count toward the billable-hour requirement. As such, pro bono work is treated with the same respect afforded to any other work.

*The Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms* has ranked Simpson Thacher sixth in New York and sixth overall nationwide in the 2003 edition. Their M&A, corporate, and securities practice groups fell into the fifth, sixth, and seventh slots, respectively. The firm has received accolades too numerous to list, including being named one of the five finalists for American Lawyer's Best Litigation Department of the Year for 2002 and being recognized as Thomson Financial's number-one firm in terms of M&A deals completed in 2002.

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, as a major

international law firm, offers relevant and meaningful work to its partners and associates and expects them to work extremely long hours in return. There are not many firms that can match its prestige.